**University of Alberta**

# German-Canadian Folk Linguistic Perceptions of Traditional Dialects

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Applied Linguistics

Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall, 2007

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395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

*Your file Votre référence*
*ISBN: 978-0-494-33121-7*
*Our file Notre référence*
*ISBN: 978-0-494-33121-7*

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# German-Canadian Folk Linguistic Perceptions of Traditional Dialects

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## Abstract

Recent work in sociolinguistics suggest that how linguists view language matters very little when it comes to language evaluations and language change. Instead, Preston[1] argues that linguists should concentrate on the perceptions and attitudes of users of the language(s) in question. This study used Perceptual Dialectology to look at the German-Canadian attitudes towards traditional dialects in Kitchener, Canada. During face-to-face interviews, 24 participants rated 14 German dialects in terms of correctness, pleasantness, and similarity. In addition, social factors were gathered for each participant, and qualitative analysis was carried out on their comments. North/south divisions were found in the ratings for pleasantness and correctness, and elements of prestige were clearly attached to the Standard German dialect. The participants also had a tendency to rate their own heritage dialects higher than average in all categories. The results from this study indicate that dialect speakers face discrimination in social and educational settings.

Key Words: German, dialects, diaspora language attitudes, perceptual dialectology

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[1] Preston, D. (1989) *Preceptual Dialectology: Nonlinguists' Views of Areal Language*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications.

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# Introduction

The impetus for this study began at a bridal shower in my hometown of Mitchell, Ontario. Many family members and friends were present, including my grandmother's brother and wife. My grandmother, her brother, and her brother's wife were all born in German-speaking countries, and had German dialects as their first language. Over the course of the afternoon, the conversation turned to German dialects that one hears in Canada, and more specifically, to my great uncle imitating Bavarian and Swiss German, much to the amusement of the rest of the family. I laughed along with the others, but was struck by the fact that my great uncle and his wife both speak dialects themselves, and stigmatized ones at that. My grandmother and her brother are both Danube Swabians[1], and my great aunt spoke Silesian German as her first language. The fact that they were native speakers of German dialects, however, did not stop them from poking fun at other non-standard dialects.

In this paper I look at language attitudes among German Canadians. This study is unique in that it used Perceptual Dialectology to examine attitudes towards dialects among the diaspora in Kitchener, Canada. The dialects were rated in terms of correctness, pleasantness, and similarity, and then the informants' answers were analyzed in relation to the participants' demographic factors. The interview format of data collection also allowed for rich qualitative analysis.

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[1] 'Danube Swabian' is the collective term for the German-speaking people who immigrated south via the Danube River 200-300 years ago. They gathered in Ulm (in Swabia) and travelled down the Danube to settle in areas of present-day Romania, Croatia, Yugoslavia, and Hungary. The Danube Swabian dialect is unrelated to Swabian.

## Previous Research on Language Attitudes

This anecdote above demonstrates, among other things, that my uncle and aunt were knowledgeable about different German dialects, and they were in effect passing on what they knew about the different dialects to my family. Besides solely being a subject of mirth for the average German Canadian, dialects are of interest to linguists and lay people alike. More specifically, Barbour (2000:5) asserts that linguists believe in protecting all of the world's dialects and languages because "the loss of a dialect or a language represents an impoverishment of human experience, and may represent an attack on the human rights of the group who use the language or dialect in question." As part of the process of keeping dialects alive and well, it is useful to try to understand some of the complicated consequences that result when a person speaks in a non-standard dialect.

In Barbour's (2000) discussion of the terms currently in use to describe language varieties in French, English and German, he paints a picture of European states striving for stronger nationhood. With the European Union gaining more power and control of its individual states, the countries within are fighting to maintain a sense of national identity. One of the ways in which this sense of identity is realized is through pushing the ideal of a common, shared language among citizens (Barbour, 2000:6). This has led to a push for monolingualism, or non-plurality of the state language, within the individual countries in Europe. According to Barbour (2000:5-6), this drive to have one

standard language and be free of dialects is not felt to the same extent in other parts of the world.

Auer (2004) concurs with Barbour when he discusses the drive to establish one standard dialect in Germany. Auer (2004:151) asserts that Standard German (also known as "High German") is the product of a European ideology that dictates that each state should have its own language. Furthermore, there should be only one language per state, and no two states should share a language. This can be seen in the present-day state boundaries in Europe, many of which delineate countries based on the language spoken there. Of importance for the present study is the fact that the European ideal has only one language per state, which inherently suggests only one dialect per state as well.

In English, there is no one universally accepted dialect that the elite among us speak, and the would-be elites among us emulate. There are, however, regional varieties in all of the English-speaking countries that are considered by many to be more correct than others. In Canada we are more likely to be able to define what is *not* standard speech (McKinnie and Dailey-O'Cain, 2002:277-294): answers might exclude the southern drawl, Newfoundland English, or the African-American vernacular. In England and in South Africa, there are forms of the language which are often pointed to as being the 'proper' way to speak, that is, the so-called 'British English' in South Africa (SouthAfrica.info, 2007:internet resource), or the Queen's English (or 'Received Pronunciation') in England (Wells, 1994:internet resource). In all of these cases, the supposedly proper

manner of producing a language almost inevitably reflects the speech of the elite in the community.

In contrast to the situation in Britain, where speakers of the non-standard variety are often unable to produce the Queen's English, (Barbour, 2000:7), German dialect speakers are typically able to speak the standard variety, albeit with an accent. This is relevant because if Germans in Canada are generally able to speak the standard but are choosing to continue to speak their native language variety, then other German speakers are aware of this choice. Speaking non-standard dialects or any other kind of minority language is a marker of social distinctiveness (Barbour, 2000: 7) that will not be lost on the listener.

Woolard (1985) discusses the common situation in which there is a dominant language that confers power to the speaker and also a language that denotes a sense of solidarity with other speech participants. She explains that these two language varieties have "competing social values" (1985: 739). Woolard argues that it is not only the education system and formal institutions that determine which language has so-called 'status' (or power), but instead it is face-to-face encounters and the bourgeoisie with their way of speaking that gives authority or power to the 'status' language (ibid:142). Woolard acknowledges that it is often the case where both the bourgeoisie and formal institutions endorse the same language, but not always. Although Woolard acknowledges the importance of speaking the standard in formal situations, she also recognizes that "it is as important to produce correct vernacular forms in the private, local arenas

of the working-class neighborhoods or peasant communities as it is to produce the official form in formal domains," (ibid: 744). Furthermore, Woolard states:

> Even where there is recognition of the authority of the legitimate language, there can be repudiation of its value on an important contrasting dimension. Competing sets of values exist, creating strong pressures in favor of the "illegitimate" languages in the vernacular markets, (ibid: 744).

Different language varieties can be called for depending on the social demands of the situation. In the present study, I also looked to see if competing language ideologies were present.

Besides simply choosing to speak one's dialect or the standard, people consider *how* they will speak their language, and how to interpret the way in which others speak the language. Cameron (1995) explores the long-standing tradition of judging the kind of language that people use and the categorization of certain kinds of language with positive or negative labels. She coined the term *verbal hygiene* to encompass activities that consciously and actively aim to direct or reinforce certain ways of communicating. Examples of verbal hygiene include such diverse activities as debates about translations or political correctness, radio broadcasts in dialect, style guides, and government regulations about language use (1995: vii, 212-213). Cameron explains that "a great many people care deeply about linguistic matters; they do not merely speak their language, they also speak copiously and passionately *about* it," (1995: ix). Furthermore, she argues that "silly or not, value judgments on language form part of every competent speaker's linguistic repertoire," (1995: xi).

Implicit within Cameron's (1995) *Verbal Hygiene* is that ideas about what constitutes good and bad language lead to deliberate manipulation of language. "Normative regulation" occurs within all languages, whether they have a written form or not, because, she reasons, languages are not living things in and of themselves, but rather a social practice and is therefore affected by social processes (1995: 5). The field of linguistics has traditionally focused on so-called 'natural', or non-prescriptive causes of language change, for example subconscious changes, or changes that occur seemingly spontaneously from a group of speakers. Despite the fact that linguists rarely study the effects of verbal hygiene, prescriptive ideas and practices among non-linguists can have a real effect on language change.

As Benson (2003: 307) explains, nonlinguists' beliefs about language, i.e.: folk linguistics, inform us about "factors that can play a critical role in language maintenance and change," (2003: 307). People's beliefs about language undoubtedly influence the way they speak, and the way they judge other people's speech.

Not only can verbal hygiene affect the course of a language, but it is also used as a "symbolic way of addressing conflicts about race, class, culture, and gender," (Cameron, 1995: 216). Social conflicts and tensions may find relatively 'safe' outlets when couched in terms of linguistic correctness. Common examples of these power struggles or attempts to maintain superiority through language can be seen in North America with the relatively negative evaluations that are put forward regarding the dialects of socially disadvantaged groups, such as the

stigmatization that is associated with so-called trailer-park (or red-neck) talk and black English.

The idea of what constitutes the more prestigious language varies by speech community, and it often corresponds with what is considered to be the standard, particularly when it is a question of dialects as opposed to distinct languages. Preston (1993: 26) explains that "what linguists believe about standards matters very little; what nonlinguists believe constitutes precisely that cognitive reality which needs to be described in a responsible sociolinguistics – one which takes speech-community attitudes and perception (as well as performance) into account." Preston is clearly encouraging sociolinguists to examine the role that language attitudes play in everyday interactions.

Many scholars have also explored the flipside of this phenomena, in other words, not just how a language influence others' perceptions, but how speaking a certain language or dialect influences the speaker's perception of self. Reding (2003) reflects on the way in which people are shaped by their first language:

> Our mother tongue is the language of our deepest feelings and strongest emotions, the voice of our most intimate thoughts. It is the language of our hearts. It is the means of expression and transmission of our culture, our traditions, our whole outlook on the world. Coming from a particular place, having a particular way of life, participating in a particular culture and sharing a language that expresses this experience in a unique and inimitable way: this is not something you can cast off like old clothes. It is woven into the very fabric of your being, it is what makes you who you are," (267).

With this, Reding points to the fact that a person's first language is a significant factor in their identity. The present study looks more specifically at the unique experience of German Canadians. It differs from the experiences of both

English/French-speaking Canadians and European Germans, leaving us to wonder what the 'old clothes' of a German Canadian may look like.

Although much of the research on language attitudes and on language and identity has focused on distinct languages as opposed to dialects of the same language, this distinction is not particularly relevant. The difference between a dialect and a language is not always an obvious one and often does not have a linguistic basis. One example in German literature is Luxembourgish: although it is considered in linguistic circles to be German dialect, the people of Luxembourg have declared it a separate language (Luxembourg Tourist Office, 2007: internet resource). It was originally considered a German dialect, but a movement to have it recognized as a distinct language gathered strength during World War II when Luxembourg was occupied by German forces (Elspass, 2004: internet resource). Although speakers of Luxembourgish and Standard German can still be mutually understood to some extent (Luxembourg Tourist Office, 2007: internet resource), it does not stop the people of Luxembourg from declaring that they have their own language. Conversely, eight Chinese 'dialects' are mutually unintelligible (Mair, 1991: 3), and some even use different writing systems (SDSU, 2001: internet resource), but whether these diverse languages should be described as different languages or should be grouped together as dialects is still an issue of controversy (Mair, 1991: 1). This demonstrates that the line drawn between dialects of a language and separate languages is often a social or political construct, not a linguistic one. Because the terms overlap and lack concrete

distinction, the expressions "language", "dialect", and "(language) variety" are used interchangeably throughout this paper.

Benson (2003) did not look at distinct languages, but rather she researched language attitudes for the different dialects of Ohio. She demonstrated how different dialect speakers had distinct attitudes about the different dialects. According to Benson, (2003: 323), it is possible that linguistic security or insecurity can influence perceptions of other dialects. She suggests that participants who see themselves as speaking a non-standard form of a language (i.e. stigmatized dialects) are more likely to rate their region as having unremarkable speech. Participants who speak closer to what is considered standard speech are conversely more likely to have negative perceptions of other regions.

As opposed to looking at specific dialects and their effects, Auer (2004) discusses the much broader issue of the roles of so-called 'imagined borders' in language maintenance and change. He argues that the reason that political boundaries often correspond to dialectal boundaries is not due to a real or imagined impediments to travel or communication, but rather it is because the border it is a mental construct. Because people believe that the language on either side of the border is different, over time it becomes a reality (Auer, 2004: 149). He further laments the fact that most social sciences have already explored the role that perceived boundaries play in those fields, but that linguists have thus far been relatively silent on the subject (ibid: 150).

Auer (2004: 150) also explores the historical importance of dialectologists and the impact they have had on politics – specifically on the justification of the expansionist policies of the German government in the first half of the 20th Century. He points out that dialectal maps originally had discreet borders that enclosed set territories. Dialectal maps produced in the 1930s and 1940s grew to include areas outside of Germany and Austria, and they also changed so that the outer borders of dialects were left open, suggesting that the German dialects could possibly expand indefinitely (ibid: 150). Auer (2004: 156) asserts that this was a reflection of the political ideology of the time in that it supported the government's drive to expand its territory.

Auer (2004: 162) also discusses the factors that can affect perceptions of dialect borders, specifically former political boundaries and religious boundaries. As an example of this phenomenon, Auer (2004: 163-4) points to the fact that participants in Germany often claim that the Alemanic/Swabian Dialect boundary runs north-south between the towns of Villingen and Schwenningen. In actual fact, this line corresponds with very few isoglosses, however, it is the former state line between Baden and Württemberg, which is now one state. Informants tend to see former and current state lines as representing a kind of linguistic barrier, although Auer (2004: 174) asserts that state boundaries act as mental barriers, not physical ones.

Chambers (2003) suggests that social classes constitute further barriers to communication. He explains that even in so-called 'fluid' societies – in which upward mobility is possible – the majority of the time people only interact with

others of the same social class (2003: 54). When a person is able to ascend the social ladder, he or she tends to immerse themselves in their new class rather than maintain meaningful relationships in both classes (ibid: 54). As an explanation for this reluctance to stay in close contact with members of the old class, Chambers (2003: 55) explains that there is a certain "discomfort that can be involved in breaching social barriers," and furthermore, the stereotypes associated with upward mobility "may remain current because they function as deterrents or vague social pressures to keep people 'in their place,'" (2003: 55).

So far we have seen different effects that dialects and language attitudes can have on an individual and on a society as a whole. Barbour (2000) argues that dialects and languages are an important part of the human experience and should be protected. The drive for stronger nationhood in Europe gave rise to standard languages, including Standard German (Barbour, 2000; Auer 2004). Furthermore, speaking in dialect in Germany is seen as a mark of social distinctiveness (Barbour, 2000: 7). This 'social distinctiveness' can manifest itself in the language attitudes that play a critical role in maintenance and change (Benson, 2003). Woolard (1985) argues that when two languages co-exist, there is a prestigious or 'status' language, as well as a language that denotes 'solidarity' among its speakers. Instances of verbal hygiene arise when a person attempts to influence the way other people speak, and Cameron (1995) argues that it is part of every speaker's linguistic repertoire. Furthermore, when people act on their language attitudes, it affects the direction of a language (Cameron, 1995). Auer (2004) demonstrates how mental dialect boundaries may be formed by historical

and political boundaries, not linguistic ones, while Chambers (2003: 54-55) suggests that dialectal boundaries are also found between social classes.

## Previous Research on Language Attitudes towards Dialects

It has been established that the language a person speaks forms a significant part of their identity and influences their day-to-day life. One area of interest that has not yet been fully addressed in linguistics is that of language attitudes among the diaspora, specifically German diaspora. The experience with my great uncle (as described above) led me to wonder just what the different attitudes towards German dialects were in Canada. There have been many studies documenting the attitudes towards various German dialects in German, Austria, and Switzerland, but there was only one to be found that dealt with dialects among the German diaspora (cf: Strauch, Parra, and Knipf, 1995). Indeed, there have been very few language attitudinal studies carried out among diaspora of any language background, let alone German.

In Germany, many people have a more powerful regional identity than national identity (Burbank, 2007: internet resource). Once immigrant groups leave their home country, however, subsequent generations have a tendency to place more value on being able to speak the standard variety of the home country. Unfortunately, studies on language attitudes towards dialects have rarely focused on the diaspora. However, some exceptions to this are McNamara's (1987) study of Israeli immigrants; Strauch, Parra, and Knipf's (1995) study of the German diaspora in Hungary; and Gardner-Chloros, McEntee-Atalianis, and Finnis' (2005) research into the Cypriot Greek dialect in London, England.

McNamara's (1987) study of diaspora looks at a minority within a minority: he researched Israeli immigrants in Melbourne, who are generally regarded as a subgroup within the Australian Jewish community. He found that first generation immigrants underwent a "transformation of social identity" (219) from 'Israeli' to 'Jewish' after they immigrated. Additionally, McNamara determined that they consistently had more positive language attitudes for English than for their native Hebrew (215), which was not a lingua franca among Australian Jews.

In Strauch et al.'s (1995) study of the diaspora, they interviewed Hungarian youths of German descent about their language knowledge and language preferences. Their research reveals that the Hungarian youths have no interest in learning the "grandparent" German dialects of their elders, but instead value the use of the Standard German dialect.

The study by Gardner-Chloros et al. compares language attitudes toward Standard Greek, Cypriot Greek, and English in London, England in 2005 and in Nicosia, Cyprus in 2001. Their research reveals that although the Greek-Cypriot culture and language is strained by an ever-increasing pressure to assimilate with the English (2005: 55), the participants strongly agree with the statement that being Greek Cypriot is part of their cultural heritage. Specifically, respondents who hold high-status occupations in England report a stronger preference for Standard Greek than for Cypriot Greek for the first language to be spoken in the home (ibid, 72). Those with lower occupational status on the other hand, prefer to speak Cypriot Greek in the home (ibid, 75). This pattern is also reflected in the

results for the issue of the importance of heritage: higher education levels of informants are linked with a tendency to view Standard Greek as an integral part of their cultural heritage (ibid, 72), while lower education is associated with a connection to Cypriot Greek (ibid, 75). Gardner-Chloros et al.'s research is of interest for the current study because it mirrors the situation found in the German-Canadian community in that many German-speaking people came here without knowledge of Standard German, however, their children generally learned Standard German in school and through German clubs.

Little research has been done to determine the specific attitudes and beliefs that people hold toward their home dialect or language when they immigrate, although Ryan, Giles, and Sebastian (1982) discuss a wide array of stereotype clusters that are typically associated with certain dialects and the speakers of these dialects. Of particular interest is the tendency of certain traditional German dialects to be associated with characteristics such as 'unpleasant' and 'incorrect', while the standard dialect is often seen as more 'correct' and 'pleasant' (Dailey-O'Cain, 1997).

## The Present Study

The situation of the German language in Canada is unique because of its heterogeneous German population. German Canadians speak a variety of dialects, practice different religions (most notably Protestant, Catholic, Hutterite, and Mennonite), stem from different countries, and immigrated in several different waves throughout Canada's history (Driedger & Hengstenberg, 1986: 91).

Particularly when people are able to speak both the standard and a non-standard variety, linguists might ask themselves questions such as, 'what information is the speaker trying to convey by choosing to use the dialect or the standard?' and 'what effect does speaking the dialect/standard have on the listener(s)?' Related to this is the question that is relevant to this study, namely: 'What attributes have been assigned to dialect speakers due to the kind of language that they speak?' In this study I seek to understand a very small slice of the extensive and complicated effects that dialect speakers have on speakers of other language varieties. Specifically, how do German Canadians feel about traditional dialects? How do these compare to German attitudes towards the dialects? What sorts of factors might influence these feelings? In order to find answers to these questions, I will use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, as will be outlined in the following chapter, along with explanations and justifications of the methodology chosen.

## Methodology

In this section some of the original research that concerned itself with language attitudes is presented, followed by a discussion of the research and methodologies that informed the present study. I will then talk about the study design, including the initial decisions that were made, the pilot study, and the criteria for participants. This is followed by information on the participants of the study presented through statistics and graphs. Finally, there is a discussion of the methods of analysis.

Researchers have found that they need to engage in various forms of minor deception in order to determine peoples' attitudes towards languages and dialects. Unfortunately, it is not possible for researchers to simply ask participants what they think of various dialects and expect to receive answers that will address the questions they ask. If the question were posed directly, such as, "What do you think of dialect X?" then it would provide some information about what the participants believe they should answer, and quite possibly not their true opinions. While this information is valuable and useful in its own right, it does not help the linguist in finding out the participants' true opinions towards dialects. Two of the main problems with asking participants directly to state their opinions are that people often do not feel it is socially acceptable or desirable to judge languages, and secondly, people may not even be consciously aware of their attitudes and are therefore unable to provide a reliable account, even if they wanted to.

Researchers have used several different strategies and methods to uncover people's true attitudes towards different language varieties. These strategies tend to rely on the fact that participants do not feel that they are making judgments on the dialects themselves, but rather are stating empirical facts or are making judgments on specific speakers of the language instead of on the language as a whole.

One of the original ways in which language attitudes were gauged was through the use of matched-guise studies. Matched-guise studies elicit attitudes about two dialects or even languages by having participants rate the same speakers who are reading a given text in two languages or dialects. The speakers are rated on traits such as 'attractiveness', 'humourousness', and 'trustworthiness'. The participants are told that each voice is a different speaker, but in actual fact one or more of the speakers is repeated using a different dialect or language. The participants then rate all the different voices as if they were different people. This technique aims to control for factors such as pitch or gender that may also influence the ratings that the participants give, and the differences in ratings for the same speaker can then be attributed to the language variety they are speaking.

Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum published the original matched-guise study in 1960. The authors compared the evaluations of English and French among bilingual speakers in Montreal, Canada. They had participants rate the speakers in terms of height, good looks, leadership, sense of humour, intelligence, religiousness, self-confidence, dependability, entertainingness,

kindness, ambition, sociability, character, and general likeability (Lambert, Hodgson, Gardner, and Fillenbaum, 1960: 44). The results of the study were clear-cut: both English and French native speakers rated the English voice higher for height, good looks, intelligence, dependability, ambition, and character. Native English speakers rated the French voices higher only in humour, and native French speakers rated French voices higher for religiousness and kindness. All other traits were either seen as being equal for both languages or were rated higher by only one set of speakers. (Lambert et al, 1960: 46-47). The fact that English was generally rated more highly than French is significant because, although French is the main language spoken in Quebec, English is the dominant language in Canada. Both native English speakers and native French speakers rated English, the language with higher prestige, more favourably. This pattern of rating the prestigious language – or, in the case of dialects, the standard dialect – more highly by both speakers of the standard variety and speakers of non-standard varieties has been observed repeatedly by subsequent matched-guise studies.

I opted not to use the matched-guise technique in the present study because it is too limiting in terms of the number of dialects or languages that can be studied, and in terms of participants. It would be difficult to find multiple speakers who are fluent in the same three or more dialects. Equally difficult would be finding participants who are also fluent in these dialects. Generally speaking, it would only be realistic to study two dialects, such as Standard

German and a widely-spoken dialect. This would limit the scope of the study and not allow for a broader picture of the dialects in Canada.

## Dennis Preston and Perceptual Dialectology

Preston (1989, 1999) describes a method of studying attitudes towards dialects that he calls "Perceptual Dialectology". This branch of socio-linguistics looks at what has been coined "folk-linguistics", or the way in which non-linguists view languages or dialects (1999: xxiv-v).

Preston justifies attempts at understanding the viewpoints or attitudes that people hold toward dialects because of what he calls the interaction of folk knowledge and social fact (1999: xxiv). Preston is referring here to the well-known axiom that believing a situation is a certain way helps to make it that way. As an example he cites, "If children believe they won't succeed, they won't."(1999: xxiv) This can be applied to language attitudes in that if people believe a certain way of speaking is low-brow, then those attempting to avoid this image will not speak that way, whether it be a specific language, dialect, or other language variety. Additionally, those people that do speak that way risk being negatively judged or even discriminated against.

Perceptual Dialectology looks specifically at how non-linguists view the geographical boundaries of dialects. There are two main tools that are then used to determine these folk attitudes. The first is a map activity in which participants are asked to draw dialect boundaries on a blank map. Dialectologists had originally assumed that people could provide clues as to where dialectal boundaries exist with this map activity, however, it quickly became evident that

the areas participants identified usually corresponded more closely with political boundaries than linguistic ones (for example, Grootaers, 1959: 373-4; Zinsli, 1957: 113; Benson, 2003: 307). Grootaers explains that "the dialect consciousness of the average speaker has no linguistic fundament," (1957: 384). Far from indicating then that the information garnered is not useful, language attitudes instead indicate the status of different languages or dialects, and help explain why people react the way they do to specific language varieties (Dailey-O'Cain, 1997: 45). Furthermore, while discussing folk dialect boundaries in Japan, Grootaers claims that they can be explained by "an elusive feeling fostered by community life," and differences perceived by the villagers he interviewed were psychological in nature and based on the historical or traditional relationships between the regions under study.

The second tool of Perceptual Dialectology is the rating of different dialects in terms of correctness, pleasantness, and similarity. Participants are given either a list of dialects that they then rate on a scale from 'incorrect' to 'correct' (for example, Dailey-O'Cain, 1997) or are given a map and asked to demarcate the map according to how different the language is in the areas shown (for example, do Canto, 1982 in Preston, 1989: 97). Activities are devised along the same vein for the ratings of dialects' 'pleasantness' and 'similarity' to the language variety spoken by the participant.

Qualitative analysis can be used as a third tool along side Perceptual Dialectology studies. The qualitative data can be obtained through a variety of means: Lance (1999) elicited evocative labels of dialects, while Dailey O'Cain

(1997) recorded the unstructured discussions that naturally ensued following the rating task.

## The Differential Scale

Before a discussion of language attitudes can ensue, it is first important to define what an 'attitude' is. Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957: 189) define attitude as something that is both learned and implicit, and is something that is "presumably acquired in much the same manner that other such internal learned activity is acquired." More specifically, an attitude reflects "predispositions to respond" by way of evaluation, (ibid: 189). Osgood et al (1957: 189-90) assert that attitudes are generally considered to exist "on a bipolar continuum with a neutral or zero reference point, implying that they have both direction and intensity," which demonstrates the theoretical basis of the "quantitative indexing of attitudes."

Although Osgood et al (1957: 191) advocate using a seven-point differential scale, with '1' being the most unfavourable, and '7' being the most favourable, this scale has been commonly adapted to accommodate many different ranges. One of the drawbacks of an even-point scale, such as a six-point scale, is that it forces participants to have an opinion: if they choose 1-3, it points in one direction, and 4-6 points in the other. For example, Preston (2002: 363) asked the participants to rate different regions' speech in the United States in terms of 'Bad English' and 'Good English' on a scale from 'a' to 'f'. The first choice, 'a', indicates that the participant 'very strongly agrees' that that region's speech is 'Bad English', while 'b' indicates that the participants 'strongly agree',

and 'c' means they 'agree'. On the other hand, if participants chose 'd', than that indicates they agree that the speech of that region is 'Good English'. 'E' shows that the participants 'strongly agree' that it is 'Good English', while 'f' indicates that they 'very strongly agree'. As is obvious from Preston's example, participants are obliged to state an opinion one way or the other.

If, however, participants were provided with an odd-point scale, they would have the neutral option of 'neither correct nor incorrect', which would be the third option. For this study, I opted for a odd-point scale so that respondents would have a neutral option to choose from. Instead of a seven-point scale, a five-point scale was used in order to minimize the complexity of the rating activity. Having two choices on either side of neutral still allowed the participants to express the extent to which their opinion leaned in a certain direction.

## Dailey-O'Cain's Work on Germany

My study was first inspired by, and then largely modeled after, Dailey-O'Cain (1997), a study that dealt with German attitudes towards traditional dialects. Dailey-O'Cain looked at 218 participants' attitudes towards different dialects within the framework of a newly reunified Germany. She used Perceptual Dialectology to look at the attitudes towards geographically delineated dialects, specifically between the former East and West German states.

Dailey-O'Cain had participants rate the speech of 31 regions in Germany, plus Austria and Switzerland. She chose participants that lived in all of the 33 regions under study. Participants rated the speech of these regions on a scale from

'1' to '6' in terms of how correct they are, how pleasant they sound, and how similar they are to the dialect that the participant speaks.

She then collected personal data from the participants, such as gender, place of birth/residence, education, employment, personal and professional ties to the former East/West states, and political affiliation. Further following the methods of Preston, she then had participants draw the dialect boundaries, "as they themselves perceived them," on blank German maps (55).

The second part of Dailey-O'Cain's study consisted of gathering qualitative data. The participants were interviewed and recorded in small groups, and "usually talked about their views without being prompted as a result of the task they had just been asked to perform" (55-6). In this way, she was able to avoid direct elicitation of their language attitudes.

With this knowledge, I set out to adapt Dailey-O'Cain's methodology for a study of German Canadians. Although I followed her methodology in many ways, not all aspects were suitable for the aims of my study. The ways in which Dailey-O'Cain's methods were adopted and/or modified are outlined in the following section.

## Initial Decisions: Dialects, Methodology, and Sample

Instead of having participants rate the same 33 dialects investigated in Dailey-O'Cain's study, I decided to ask them to rate a smaller number of well-known dialects. I first referred back to the dialects that were prominent in Dailey-O'Cain's (1997) study, as well as choosing dialects that are generally well known among the German-Canadian community. Because I wanted to optimize the

amount of useful data, I did not want to have too many dialects that participants would be unfamiliar with. Unfortunately, the situation still arose on a few occasions where the participant was familiar with only a few dialects. In all three of these cases, the participants apologized on several times because they felt they were not being helpful. The decision to study only 14 dialects was based on a desire to avoid these types of situations as much as possible and to collect only useful data, which can only happen when participants are knowledgeable in the subject area, while at the same time gathering as much data as possible.

Generally speaking, the dialects under study were either quite well known, such as Bavarian and Swabian, or were represented by the major cities in the region, such as the 'Berlin dialect' or the 'Hanover dialect'. In addition, the dialects of Switzerland and Austria were also studied. Please see Appendix C for a complete list of the dialects studied. In hindsight, there are a few other dialects that could also have been studied, such as Danube Swabian and Transylvanian Saxon[2]. Both of these dialects have significant numbers of speakers within the Kitchener-Waterloo German community, and they both even have community centres, which are the Schwaben Club and the Transylvania Club, respectively. There is also a significant German-speaking Mennonite[3] population near Kitchener-Waterloo, who are also a relatively visible due to the popular, bi-weekly markets that they hold in neighbouring St. Jacob. Because of the number

[2] 'Transylvanian Saxon' is the term used for the German-speaking people that colonized the Transylvanian area of present-day Romania in the 12th and 13th Centuries. The Transylvanian Saxon dialect is unrelated to the Saxon.

[3] Mennonites are members of a Christian religion that originated in Europe. After suffering persecution in their home countries, they fled to many different countries, including Canada. The Mennonites in the Kitchener-Waterloo region speak a German dialect that is often referred to as 'Platt' or 'Low German'.

of speakers and the fact that they are highly visible via their clubs or markets in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, it would have been possible to study these dialects as well.

In order to study the attitudes of the second generation of German Canadians, it was first necessary to define what exactly the 'second generation' would entail for the purposes of this study. The easiest to rule out were the 'first generation' of German immigrants – those that had come to Canada as adults. Because I wanted to determine 'German-Canadian' attitudes, it was important that the participants spoke German fluently in order that they might have had some exposure to the dialects, as well as that these attitudes were formed while living in Canada and not in Germany. While it is impossible to determine the moment when an attitude is formed, it can be assumed that when a person grows up in Canada and has spent the majority of their life in Canada, then their attitudes will be mostly formed in Canada. The determination as to whether or not a person grew up in Canada, was made by the age at which they came to Canada: if they arrived before age 12, and therefore attended high school in Canada, I considered them second- generation Canadians as opposed to first. Therefore, the criteria for participants were as follows:

- German heritage,
- German as a first language,
- born in Canada or came to Canada before the age of 12,
- still fluent in the language, which was determined by the participants' self-reports that they could comfortably carry on a conversation in German, and
- for ethical considerations, are over the age of majority, which is 18 in Canada.

While these criteria rule out a significant proportion of the population that would consider themselves a "German Canadian", it does seek to control for attitudes that were formed while in Germany and then brought over when the participant[4] immigrated. Furthermore, I believed that a native-like knowledge of the language was necessary in order to have had some exposure to German dialects – and the attitudes that surround them.

To collect data about the language attitudes of German Canadians, I first needed to determine the specific German community that I would study. For the study, I analyzed the data from 24 German Canadians from the Kitchener-Waterloo area of southern Ontario. There were 24 interviews because this was the maximum number that I had the resources to carry out. I chose this site because of its extensive German history.

The city of Kitchener has a strong history of German heritage, beginning with the first German settlers in 1800. The city itself was originally called 'Berlin.' In the first decades of the 20th century, the municipal government even endorsed the yearly birthday celebrations of the German Kaiser (Panthel, 1990: 81). At that time, German was the lingua franca of the area, with over 20 daily or weekly newspapers publishing in German (ibid: 81). Berlin, Ontario, was renamed "Kitchener" in 1916 due to the fact that Canada was then in the middle of a war with Germany. Despite the cultural and linguistic suppression that German Canadians experienced during the World Wars, a strong German tradition remains in Kitchener. There is, for example, the Concordia Club, which

[4] Please note that the terms "participant", "respondent", and "informant" are used interchangeably throughout this study in order to avoid repetition.

was founded in 1873 and is the largest and oldest of the German organizations in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, and they are also responsible for initiating the annual celebration of the largest Oktoberfest outside of Germany (The University of Waterloo Library Catalogue, 2004: internet resource). There are other German organizations in the city, such as the Alpine Club, the Transylvania Club, the Schwaben Club, and the German-Canadian Business Association, which supports the annual German-style Christmas markets in Kitchener (GCBA, 2004: internet resource). The Schwaben Club and the Transylvanian Club are of particular significance because they are named after and were founded by members of stigmatized dialects. The presence of these organizations – whose members clearly identify with a non-Standard variety of German – in Kitchener-Waterloo therefore showed promise that German Canadians would have some awareness of the different dialects to be found.

Once I had contacted potential participants and set up interviews, I then met them at a neutral location at their convenience. The interviews were voice recorded, and consisted of two main parts: a rating activity and a question/answer period. The rating activity asked participants about how correct and pleasant they considered certain dialects, as well as how similar certain dialects were to their own way of speaking German.

## Pilot Study

Before the main study was undertaken, a pilot study was carried out to determine if my research instruments would work as planned. This included everything from the mundane (for example, does the voice recorder work?) to the

practical (is the set up for the rating activity as clear as possible?) to the vital (are German Canadians willing to respond to the solicitation letter?).

The pilot study was carried out in Edmonton, Alberta because of practical constraints: I did not have enough time in Ontario to carry out the pilot study, make the necessary adjustments, receive ethics approval, and then proceed with the main study. Therefore, the pilot study was conducted in Edmonton, where I was located. Edmonton also has a thriving German community, as is evidenced by the fact that it has a German-Canadian Cultural Association, German bilingual schools, a German Saturday School, and several other German clubs and organizations.

Participants were initially contacted either by e-mail or by word of mouth and then invited to participate. The interviews were conducted either at their homes, at their places of work, or at restaurants: all places of the participants' choosing so that they would be the most comfortable with the location. Three interviews were done in pairs, and two were carried out with only one participant. The interviews consisted of two parts: a rating activity and a question/answer period, the latter of which was recorded for later qualitative analysis.

In the rating activity, there were initially 15 different dialects to be rated on a scale of '1' to '5'. The dialects were rated on perceived correctness, pleasantness, and similarity, with '5' being the most correct, pleasant, or similar, and '1' being the least. One of the dialects, the "Mecklenburg-Vorpommern" dialect, was removed from the list after the pilot study, because none of the eight participants were familiar with it. Additionally, the 'don't know' column was

moved to the left side from the right side of the sheet, so that it was first option that people would see when completing the task. This move was made only as a slight reminder that participants should choose this option if they were not familiar with the dialect in question.

The written portion of the question/answer period did not change, but I added three more questions to my own personal interview guide that could help to flush out some of the written answers that people gave. I also decided to record the entire interview instead of only the question-and-answer period, because the participants tended to make comments on the dialects as we went through the rating activities.

## Data Collection

Before leaving for Ontario, solicitation e-mails were sent out to five different German clubs, as well as to personal contacts in Kitchener-Waterloo. The clubs that I contacted were as follows:

1. the Concordia Club, which bills itself as a "German-Canadian heritage and social club," (Concordia Club Website: internet resource). It has the largest membership in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, (University of Waterloo Library Catalogue, 2004: internet resource) and welcomes Germans of all dialects and heritages.
2. the Alpine Club, which was founded by Danube Swabians from Gotschee, (Alpine Club Website: internet resource).
3. Hubertushaus, which describes itself as a "German-Canadian hunting and fishing club," encourages people from all German-speaking areas of Europe to join. (Hubertushaus Website: internet resource).
4. the Transylvania Club, whose members are primarily from this region of Romania with a large German-speaking population, (Schwaben Club: internet resource).
5. the Schwaben Club, whose members are mainly Danube Swabians and their descendents, (Schwaben Club: internet resource).

These five clubs were chosen to establish contacts because they are the most prominent German clubs in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. Four personal acquaintances were also contacted because of their links to the German community in Kitchener Waterloo. Please see Appendix A for the solicitation letter that was used. In addition, the local German-language radio program was even kind enough to air a short interview with me to ask for more volunteers for the study.

Voluntary participation in this project was assured by the solicitation techniques that were used. Participants heard about my study either by word of mouth, through bulletin boards and/or club e-mails, or over the radio. They could then respond if interested by e-mail or phone for more information and/or to arrange an interview.

The interviews had two distinct sections: the three rating activities followed by a question and answer period. The rating activities determined, among other things, the participants' awareness of dialects and their ideas of the correctness, pleasantness, and similarity of these dialects. The spoken portion of the interview was used to gather more in-depth qualitative data and also to place the participants' answers within a social context by eliciting data to determine German heritage, German language experience, and social class.

Participants were first asked to complete the three rating activities, each of which asked participants to rate the 14 traditional German dialects in terms of correctness, pleasantness, and similarity the kind of German that they themselves speak. It is important to note that participants were asked to rate the similarity of

the different dialects as compared to the kind of German that they themselves speak. They were asked how similar the dialects were and not how different they were because according to Weijnen, differences always exist (1968: 595). In order to assess perceived connections between dialects, it is therefore important to ask about similarity and not difference. The dialects were rated on a scale from '1' to '5', with '1' being the most correct, pleasant, or similar and '5' being the least. Participants were asked to circle the 'X' for 'don't know' if they were unfamiliar with the dialect or weren't sure about how to answer it. Please see Appendix B for the layout of the rating activity.

The interview consisted of asking for personal information to place the participants (and therefore their answers in the rating activity) in a social context. Participants were asked to answer basic questions relating to things such as age, gender, social class, German-language experience, and German heritage. Additionally, participants were questioned about the extent of their German use both as a child and currently. They then answered a few questions that were designed to determine whether they identified themselves as Germans or as Canadians using questions such as, "When a Canadian asks you where you are from, what do you say?" Furthermore, I asked the participants where the best German and the best English is spoken in order to gain insights into their more general beliefs about the existence of correct forms of language. Finally, follow-up questions were asked about some of their answers, such as "What about the Swabian dialect made you chuckle?" or "I noticed that you rated the Austrian dialect as 'very pleasant'. What kind of experiences have you had with the

Austrian dialect?" Please see Appendix C for a complete list of questions that were asked.

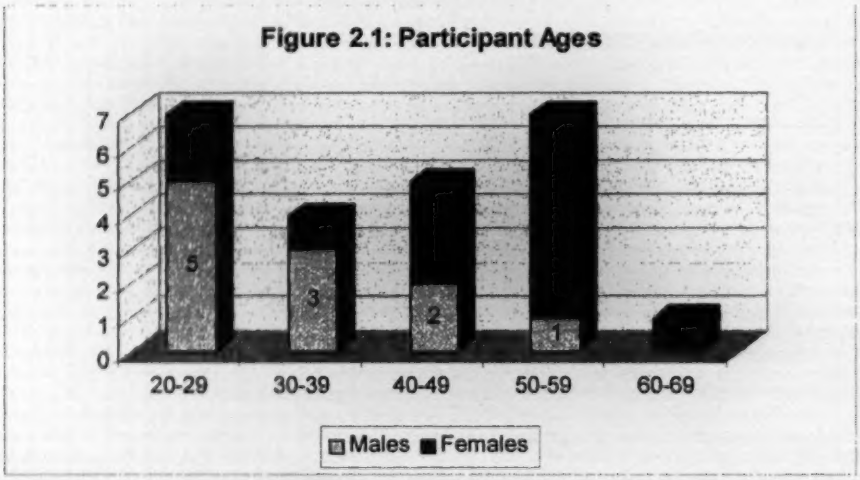
Traditional Perceptual Dialectology studies do not necessarily involve collecting any personal information of the respondents. However, it was necessary for me to include these types of questions in my study because I hoped to see if there was a connection between any of the participants' social factors and their responses to the rating activities.

Ideally the interviews would have been carried out in groups, as they were in Dailey-O'Cain's study (1997). However, due to the relatively strict criteria used, many of the participants who agreed to be interviewed simply did not know anyone else that fit the criteria. Therefore, I opted to interview the participants in a one-on-one situation as opposed to arranging group interviews in which the participants would not know each other. As a result of generally interviewing only one participant at a time, I needed to use more explicit elicitation techniques to garner information about language attitudes. This unfortunately lacked the naturalness that was present in Dailey-O'Cain's (1997) study, in which participants spontaneously discussed the dialects after the map activity. On the other hand, I was then able to control the direction of interviews to a greater extent, which allowed me to pursue areas that were of the most interest to this study.

## Participant Sample

Twenty-four German Canadians were interviewed for this study, 11 men and 13 women. The participants ranged in age from 21 to 60, with an average age of 41.9 years. The men were generally younger than the women with an average age of 35.6 years, compared to the women with an average age of 47.2 years. The majority of my male participants were younger, in the age range of 20 to 39, while the most the female participants were older, in the 40 to 59 range. If the ages are regarded irrespective of gender, however, a more even distribution emerges, with seven participants in the 20-29 range, four in the 30-39 range, five in the 40 to 49 range, and eight participants over 50.

**Figure 2.1: Participant Ages**




The participants had German heritage from several regions in Germany, as well as Switzerland, Austria, and the Balkan states. The region of heritage for each participant was determined by looking at their birthplace, places they have lived, dialects spoken as a child, and dialects spoken by parents. For all of the participants, a distinct trend emerged as to the region in Germany with which

they are most connected. Please see Figure 2.2 for information on the heritage areas of the participants. If the participant did not have a strong tie to a geographical area, then they were assumed to have heritage in the region associated with the dialect they grew up with. Some of the participants had two areas that they appeared equally associated with, such as the 28-year-old male who grew up speaking both Swabian and Danube Swabian from either parent. In such cases, both areas are marked on the map and considered a heritage area for the participant.

The map shows that while there were a variety of dialect areas represented in the study, there were no participants with heritage in the former GDR (East Germany). Furthermore, Danube Swabians were the most represented group with five of the participants identifying with this area.

**Figure 2.2: Heritage Area of Participants**

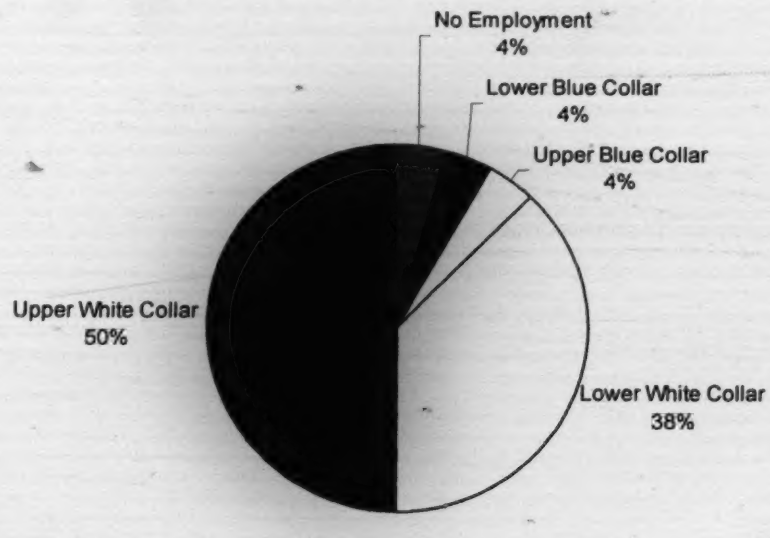
The scale for measuring socio-economic status was based largely on MacAulay's (1997: 174) study of Glasgow residents. He broke down the socioeconomic scale into four sections:

| | |
|---|---|
| Class I | professional and managerial |
| Class II | white collar, intermediate, non-manual |
| Class IIb | skilled manual |
| Class III | unskilled |

Because occupation is seen as an indicator for socio-economic status, a similar scale was used for my study. This also closely reflects the scale used in Dailey- O'Cain's 1997 study (70).

1. Unemployed and no previous occupation
2. Lower blue collar (manual labour jobs that do not require specialized training, such as a janitor)
3. Upper blue collar (manual jobs that require specialized training, such as an electrician)
4. Lower white collar (non-manual jobs that do not require extensive specialized training, such as administrative assistants; students were included in this category)
5. Upper white collar (non-manual jobs that require extensive specialized training such as a teacher or computer programmer)

**Figure 2.3: Socio-Economic Status**



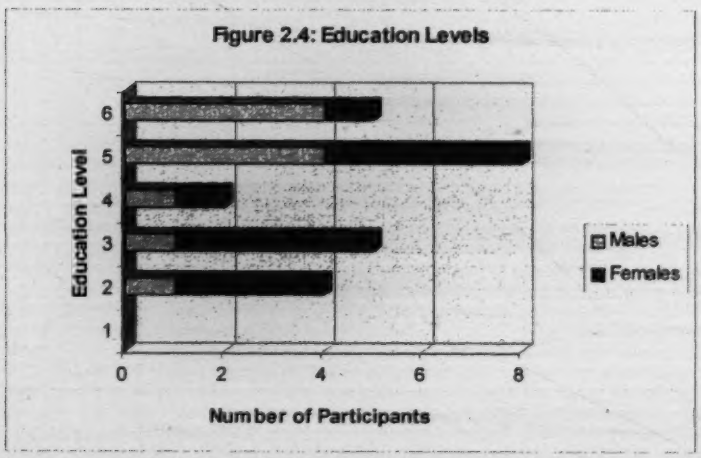

As can be seen from this graph, participants were largely white collar, with half of the participants falling under the heading of 'upper white collar'. The amount of education that most participants had also reflected the same trend, although not quite as strongly.

To measure education, I used a scale similar to the one employed by Dailey-O'Cain (1997: 68-69). However, as part of the requirements of my study is that participants were living in Canada when they were at the age that most students attend high school, it would be appropriate to tailor the questions to Canadian standards, such as (1) Did you receive your high school diploma? (2) What kind of post-secondary education have you had?

The response categories were reorganized into:

1. no high school diploma
2. high school diploma
3. some tertiary education, but no degree/diploma
4. college diploma[5]
5. bachelor degree
6. graduate or professional degree

Figure 2.4: Education Levels




All participants had received at least their high school diploma, and the majority of them had also attended college and/or university. The males had, on average, higher education levels than the female participants, which may be due to the fact that they were younger on average.

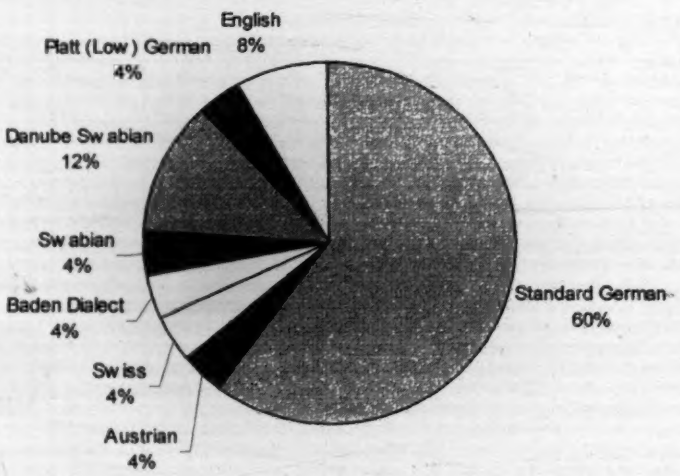
[5] In Canada, 'colleges' are distinct from universities in that they grant diplomas, not bachelor degrees. In addition, they tend to emphasize practical experience over theory, and their programs generally take about two years to complete.

It should be noted that the education reported by the participants was conducted primarily – and often exclusively – in English, and not in German. This would indicate that any trends found in the different education levels would not be a direct result of their education per se, in that they would not learn about Standard German specifically in school. Instead, it might be the result of a more general 'standard-is-better' philosophy espoused in educational institutions.

Participants were also asked to identify their first language or dialect that they learned to speak, and seven different language varieties were mentioned: Standard German (also known as 'High German'), Austrian, Zurich Swiss, the Baden dialect, the Danube Swabian dialect, Low German (also known as 'Platt'[6]), and English.

[6] 'Platt' German is generally thought to encompass the traditional North-western dialects. However, some people will use the term 'Platt' as a synonym for 'dialect'. In addition, the dialects that Mennonites speak are often referred to as Platt both by themselves and by others. If a participant knew their dialect only as 'Platt', then this is the term that was also used in this study.

**Figure 2.5: First Languages**

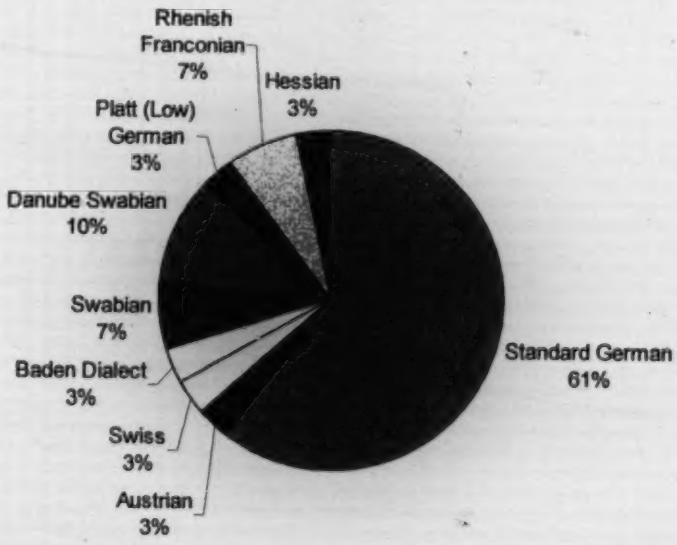



The majority of the participants were raised speaking what they considered to be High German, followed by Danube Swabian. As a possible explanation for this, it should be noted here that many Germans feel they are giving their children an advantage in life if they learn Standard or 'High' German from a young age. In Germany today, Standard German is spoken by just about everyone; even those whose first language is a dialect usually master the standard to a great extent. Danube Swabians, on the other hand, may not have had the same level of exposure to Standard German because of the geographic isolation of their original communities. Participants' parents who spoke Danube Swabian may not have been comfortable teaching their children the Standard German because they themselves could not speak it well. If the participants considered themselves as having learned two language varieties simultaneously as a young

child, such as one who had learned both English and the Baden dialect simultaneously, then both dialects are included in Figure 2.5: First Languages. There was one other participant who indicated that English was his first language. I decided to include this participant's data in the study despite failing to reach one of the criteria (German as a first language) because both of his parents were first generation German immigrants, and the participant later became fluent in German while attending primary school in East Frisia, in northern Germany.

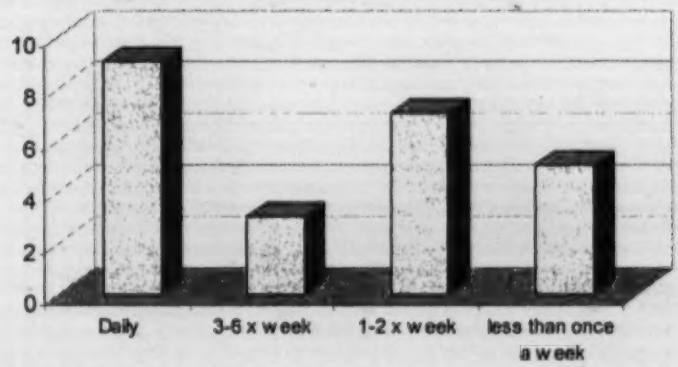
This chart can be compared to what varieties are now commonly spoken (see Figure 2.6 below). Please note that the percentages vary somewhat from the first language chart, most notably with the inclusion of two new dialects: Rhenish Franconian and Hessian. Many of the respondents reported having some level of ability in multiple dialects. For this chart, multiple answers of participants were included only if the participant indicated that they were comfortable having a conversation in the dialect. Interestingly, the percentage of participants who reported speaking High German did not increase significantly.

**Figure 2.6: German Dialects Currently Spoken**



The next set of questions that participants were asked to answer involved the frequency with which they speak German. Participants were asked what the main language in their household is, how often they speak German with family, and how often they speak it with friends. In retrospect, it would have been helpful to also ask how often they speak it at work, because two participants indicated that German was the main language of their workplaces, which are a German school and a German-language radio station. While none of the participants reported that they no longer speak German at all, only nine still speak German on a daily basis, and five speak German less than once a week. Of the 10 participants who indicated that they speak German between once and six times a week, the majority of those speak German with their parents and/or grandparents only, and not at all in their current place of residence. However, these numbers should be treated with caution because they are self-reported. It is entirely possible that the participants were trying to be helpful and erred on the higher side when estimating how often they speak German.

**Figure 2.7: Frequency of Speaking German**



The amount of time that the participants had spent in a German-speaking place could also quite conceivably influence their responses, and so this information was also elicited and recorded. As an overview, a breakdown of the length of participants' residence in German-speaking places follows.

Their length of residence was organized into four categories: less than six months spent in a German-speaking place, six months to two years spent in a German-speaking place, more than two years to five years residence, or more than five years of residence. As can be seen from the chart, half the participants have spent two years or less in a German-speaking place, and half lived more than two years in Germany or another German-speaking place. Eight of the participants resided in a German-speaking place for more than five years, while five have only ever been to Germany, Austria, or Switzerland on short visits. All of the participants interviewed had spent some time in a German-speaking place, with the minimum amount of time spent there was four weeks on vacation. On the other end of the scale is a participant who lived in Germany for 11 years before moving to Canada.

**Figure 2.8: Length of Residence in Germany**

As is true of all linguistic studies, it was not possible to have a randomized population. Especially in the area of socio-economic status, the sample is decidedly one-sided. In order to achieve as much variation as possible, I sought out various age groups and genders of participants. Finding willing participants was not as easy as I had assumed, and difficulties were often encountered in finding people that were both willing to volunteer an hour of their time and fit the criteria. I had to turn away many people who came forward to volunteer either because a) they were not fluent and/or no longer fluent in a German dialect, or because b) they had grown up in a German-speaking place and had come to Canada as teenagers or even adults.

## Methods of Analysis

The analysis of the data I collected occurred in two distinct stages: quantitative and qualitative analysis. First the participants' responses to the rating activities were analyzed, followed by their comments. Where the qualitative data was relevant to a trend noticed in the quantitative data, it is mentioned in the discussion of the rating activities. However, many of the comments that the participants made about language and dialects did not fit into the categories of 'correctness', 'pleasantness', or 'similarity'. As such, their ideas about language and the attitudes they have that are not associated with ideas of correctness, pleasantness, or similarity, were analyzed separately.

The participants each filled out three rating activities and gave answers to personal questions that would allow me determine social factors, such as their education and the amount of time spent in Germany. To begin interpreting this

data, the first step was to create extensive spreadsheets with all information for all participants recorded in tables, including their responses to the rating activities.

Having the data set up in table format allowed for quick calculation of the similarities and differences between different dialects. As such, the first calculation was the mean rating for each dialect, followed by the standard deviation in the responses given. I then looked for trends that indicated what kinds of participants tended to report different answers.

The mean or 'average' is a descriptive statistic that is calculated by adding up all the responses for a given question and then dividing this number by the total number of responses. It was used to look at the overall average response for the different rating questions, as well as the responses by group – such as how High German native speakers rated the dialects in terms of correctness as compared to the dialect native speakers.

Standard deviation is a common measurement that determines how widely the numbers in a set vary from one another. Standard deviation was used to look at the consistency of the responses. It first takes the mean of the responses, and then finds the square root of the variances from this average. If the responses to a given question are consistent, then the standard deviation will be quite low, usually close to zero. The larger the standard deviation, the greater the spread of responses.

After analyzing the numerical data, I then looked at the spoken comments. In order to make sense of the more than 11 hours of recorded data and about 40 pages of written notes, the participants' comments were organized into various

subheadings. Because this study is concerned with dialects, it seemed a logical place to begin sorting. Comments that were directed at particular dialects were grouped together in order to determine if there were any trends in the opinions expressed. Generic comments that offered little insight into attitudes were omitted, such as, "My ex-husband spoke Bayrisch[7]." If, however, the participant were to continue on with "My ex-husband spoke Bayrisch, and that's about as far from German as you're going to get," then that comment would be included. Participants expressed opinions about the following dialects: the Baden dialect, Bavarian, the Berlin dialect, Swabian, Danube Swabian, Swiss, Austrian, Saxon, the Hanover dialect, and Low German (or 'Platt').

In addition to organizing and analyzing comments that were directed at specific dialects, I also noticed that many participants felt strongly about the role of dialects in general, whether it be supportive of dialects or not, such as this comment on learning German in schools: "I'm hoping that if someone teaches [German]...they would offer the highest standard available, that you would teach the High German. Same as when I went to school. I was taught the Parisian French whereas now it's Quebecois, and that is also sloppy French." However, most of the non-specific comments about dialects were memories that the participants had about being corrected at German school when they spoke in dialect.

A few other areas of interest came to light when the spoken comments were reviewed, such as the reality of being identified as a German in the post-war period and how that affected their language usage, and reactions to the

[7] 'Bayrisch' is the German word for 'Bavarian'.

questionnaire itself, such as comments about the validity of the 'correctness' exercise. A thorough analysis of the spoken comments can be found in the next chapter.

## Summary

Perceptual Dialectology as described by Preston (1989, 1999, 2002) was chosen as the methodology for this study because of its ability to determine folk attitudes towards the dialects, and the geographical boundaries of these dialects. The design of this study was informed to a large extent by Dailey-O'Cain (1997), which looked at the attitudes towards traditional dialects in Germany.

The present study concerns itself mainly with the analysis of three of the tasks that participants were asked to carry out: the rating of 14 traditional German dialects in terms their correctness, similarity, and pleasantness. The ratings were completed using a five-point differential scale. Social information about the participants was also gathered, including age, gender, socio-economic status, first language spoken, amount of time spent in Germany, and attitudes towards standard language in general. The ratings were then analyzed to determine trends and to establish links between the social variables gathered and the responses given. The following chapter is concerned with elucidating the results of this analysis.

## Analysis

In this chapter I will talk about the informants' ratings and will break down the replies by geographical origin, gender, age, socio-economic status, and length of residence in a German-speaking place. It was not possible, however, to include the statistical significance of the results due to the small number of informants who were interviewed. Dailey-O'Cain (1997) found distinct trends in her much larger study of German language attitudes, which were discussed in the previous chapter and are mentioned again below. In the present study, I had assumed that the trends would be less distinct, simply because participants do not carry out many – or in some cases, any – daily activities in German, and they would therefore have less exposure to the language attitudes that go along with the dialects. This created a pool of participants with different perceptions of the language than one would find in Germany. Although they all lived geographically in the same area of Canada, they had widely varying viewpoints.

As described in the previous chapter, participants rated 14 dialects in terms of perceived correctness, pleasantness, and similarity to the kind of German that the participants speak themselves. The dialects were rated on a five-point differential scale with '5' being the highest rating (i.e.: most correct, most pleasant, and most similar), and '1' being the lowest rating (i.e.: least correct, least pleasant, and least similar). The results of the three rating activities are outlined in the following sections.

## Correctness

This section is the largest due to the richness of the qualitative data that participants provided and because of the controversy it engendered. Some participants questioned the validity of stating that one dialect could be more correct than another, and this topic is explored below. The analysis of the correctness task will begin by examining the ratings that participants gave for the different dialects and then exploring the comments that participants made that dealt with the correctness of certain dialects.

**Table 3.1: Correctness Responses**

| | Average | Standard Deviation | # of Responses |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Hanover dialect** | 4,2 | 0,98 | 16 |
| **Hamburg dialect** | 4,1 | 0,85 | 19 |
| **Berlin dialect** | 3,8 | 0,91 | 20 |
| **Rheinland dialect** | 3,4 | 0,89 | 16 |
| **Cologne dialect** | 3,4 | 1,20 | 18 |
| **Hessian dialect** | 3,3 | 1,11 | 13 |
| **Austrian** | 3,2 | 1,51 | 21 |
| **Baden** | 2,8 | 0,98 | 11 |
| **Saxon** | 2,8 | 1,11 | 20 |
| **Franconian** | 2,7 | 0,70 | 15 |
| **Silesian dialect** | 2,7 | 1,11 | 7 |
| **Bavarian** | 2,7 | 1,20 | 21 |
| **Swabian** | 2,6 | 1,18 | 22 |
| **Swiss** | 2,2 | 1,35 | 20 |
| **Averages overall:** | **3,3** | **1,10** | **17,0** |

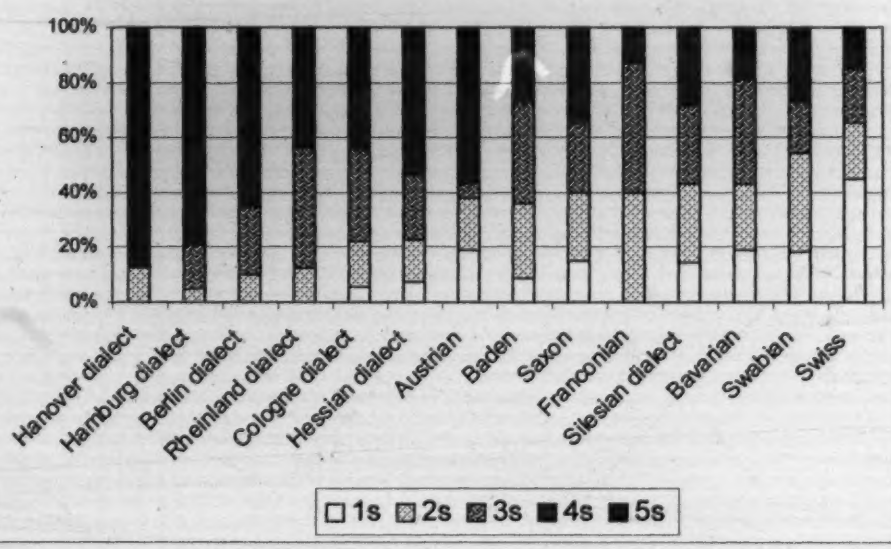
The overall average scores are presented for each of the dialects in the table, along with the standard deviation of the responses, and the number of informants who responded to the question (i.e.: 24 participants, excluding the 'don't know' responses. They are arranged from 'most correct' to 'least correct'. Each respondent's mean correctness rating was calculated, and a range of 2.0 to 5.0 was established for the participants' average responses. The average responses for the different dialects also had a large range, 2.2 to 4.2.

The general consensus in Germany is that the best Standard German is spoken in Hanover. Dailey-O'Cain (1997: 99) also found that the majority of Germans reported that Hanover's dialect was the most correct. The German Canadians in the present study reflected the attitudes found by Dailey-O'Cain by rating the Hanover dialect as the most correct kind of German.

The data above (from Table 3.1) has been transformed into chart form below in order to see trends more easily. Each dialect is shown with the breakdown of the percentage of the ratings it received. For example, the Hanover dialect received two '2's, six '4's and seven '5's to give it the highest correctness rating overall, whereas the Swiss dialect on the other hand had nine '1's (the lowest rating possible), four '2's, four '3's, one '4' and two '5's. This chart also lists the dialects in the order that they were ranked from most to least correct, from left to right.

This chart also allows us to see the spread of responses and have a visual representation of dialects that had high standard deviations, such as the Austrian and Swiss dialects. Higher standard deviations indicate a lack of agreement among participants about a dialect's correctness.

**Figure 3.1: Rating Percentages for Correctness**



Another distinct trend that is visible from Figure 3.1 is the geographical location of the different dialects. As one participant put it while talking about Bavarian, a southern dialect, "that's about as far from German as you're going to get." The top three 'correct' dialects are in the North, followed by three central German dialects. The southern German dialects, the Saxon dialect, and the dialects not associated with Germany are rated as the least correct. Dailey-O'Cain (1997) also found in her study that the Saxon dialect was particularly shunned in Germany. Informants generally cited its pronunciation as the reason for disliking the dialect, although they were likely also influenced by the fact that was spoken only in the former East German state and still smacks of 'otherness' to western Germans.

The North/South divide was particularly salient in the correctness ratings. An informant with heritage in southern Germany commented on this specifically when he explained, "Being that my relatives are from Munich, they spend a lot of time making fun of other people's dialects. Munichs think their German is very good and everybody else sounds funny…if you're in the South, you make fun of the North. That's one of the things you do." Participants with heritage in northern Germany also commented on the southern dialects. Swabian, of all the southern dialects, elicited the most comments from the informants. One participant who has heritage in Hamburg explained that Swabians "sort of slur everything." More telling, however, was an anecdote that she shared of not understanding the language of a Swabian-Canadian curtain-maker. While recounting the story to

me, she added that once she realized what the other lady was 'trying' to say, she corrected her pronunciation.

One informant's ratings of the dialects was not included in this chart because he could not come to terms with the validity of calling one dialect more or less correct than another, and he did not feel comfortable completing this activity. His assertion that all dialects were equally and absolutely correct did allow me to include his 'average' rating of '5' for calculations having to do with attitudes affected by social factors such as gender and heritage region. Please see the section entitled 'Responses to the Correctness Task' for a more in-depth discussion of participants' views on rating dialects 'correct'.

#### Influence of Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study are only elaborated on if there appears to be a 'trend' or a pattern across the different participant categories studied. If no pattern emerged, then the variable is not discussed in detail. This is the case in the current section, as well as in the *Pleasantness* and *Similarity* sections.

Dailey-O'Cain (1997: 96) found that overall correctness ratings were influenced by the geographical origin of the informants, even though it was not at a significant level. Specifically, northern Germans tended to rate all the dialects more highly than the southerners (ibid: 89). I also looked to see if origin influenced the ratings given.

The mean of the participants' ratings was calculated by heritage region. Those with northern German heritage included participants with the strongest ties

to Hanover, East Frisia, Poland, and those with Low German heritage. Participants with central German heritage were from the Ruhr region, Hessen, Sudetenland, and those that spoke Rhineland dialects. The southern German heritage category included speakers of the Baden dialect, Low Alemannic, Swabian, Bavarian, Swiss German, Austrian German, and Danube Swabian.

The seven participants with northern German heritage had average correctness ratings of 3.64, while those with central German heritage had an average rating of 3.07. Participants hailing from southern German-speaking regions rated dialects 3.12 on average. This paints a clear picture of participants with northern German heritage rating all dialects 'more correct' on average than their more southern counterparts.

The ratings were also divided by gender to see if any differences could be found. The men in my study rated the dialects an average 3.37 for correctness, and women who volunteered for this study rated the dialects 3.16 on average. Dailey-O'Cain (1997: 90) also found little difference in the ratings between the genders in her study.

The informants' responses to the correctness exercise were broken down into age groups to look for trends. The respondents in their 20s were the most critical, with an average rating of 3.04, while the respondents in their 30s had the highest average rating with 3.63. The 40-to-49-year-old informants had an average rating only slightly higher than those in their 20s, with 3.2, and the respondents who were 50 years old or more had an average rating of 3.3. The age groups did not follow a linear pattern of increasingly high ratings, as they did in

Dailey-O'Cain (1997), although the older participants did rate dialects more positively overall. This difference between German and Canadian respondents may be explained by the fact that the participants in this study received the majority of their German input at an early age. Many of the instances that the participants cited of overt correct of a dialect occurred at German School or with their close family. If the participants hear and interact less in German as they age, then their attitudes are less likely to change over time.

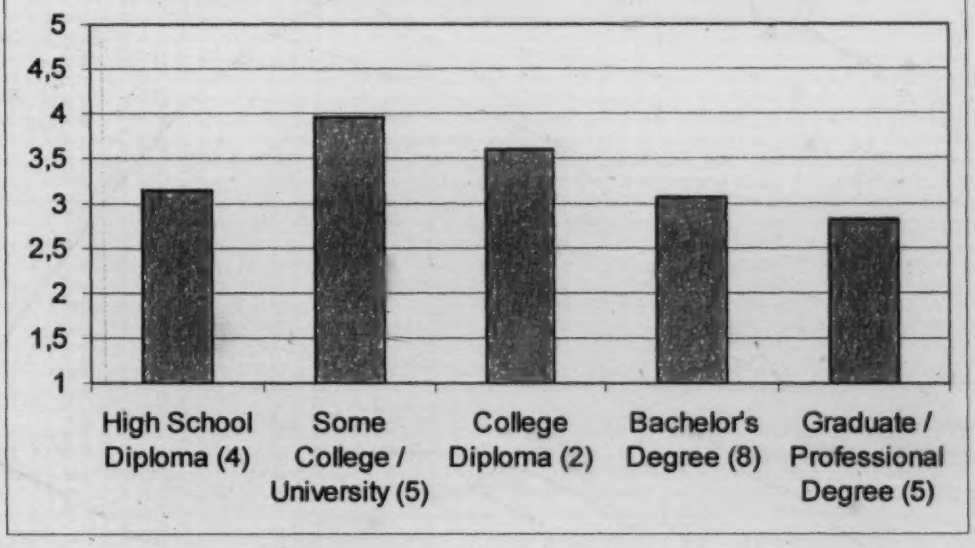
While many measures of socio-economic status rely on occupation, Chambers (2003: 48) explains that this is not an exact science, in that individuals with the same job can come from wildly different education levels and can make significantly different income levels. Measures of socio-economic status are limited in that they cannot consider each person's situation, but can only look at levels as they pertain to the average.

I did not look at the effects of occupation on the informants' ratings because of limited variation of the socio-economic levels in my study. However, Ash (2002) found that in some studies, education was a significant independent factor in addition to occupation. For this reason, I choose to look at the level of education of the informants.

Dailey-O'Cain (1997: 91) found that informants with the lowest level of education gave dialects the lowest ratings, and similarly those with lower blue-collar jobs were also the most critical. There was an opposite trend in the present study, however, as those informants without a degree or diploma rated dialects

more 'correct' on average than those with tertiary education. The results are displayed in the graph below, with the number of informants in each category.

**Figure 3.2: Correctness Ratings by Education Level**




As can be seen in the graph above, the amount of education that a participant has does seem to follow a trend for those with some tertiary education, in that more education is associated with lower correctness ratings. Those participants with a high school diploma only did have lower ratings, but it is impossible to determine if this is indicative of a larger trend because of the small number of participants in this group. Especially considering that the last four categories correspond with Dailey-O'Cain's (1997) study and Gardner-Chloros et al.'s (2005) study, it would seem to suggest that the High School Diploma category is simply too small to give an accurate account of the situation.

Dailey-O'Cain (1997: 94) found that the amount of contact that participants had with the opposite side of Germany (East Germany if the participant was from the West, and West Germany if they were from the East) affected the participants' correctness ratings. Specifically, those with more contact tended to rate all dialects more critically, while those with little or no contact had the highest mean ratings. In order to determine if a similar trend could be found in the present study, I looked at the amount of time spent that participants had spent in Germany to see if that correlated with lower correctness ratings.

There was a slight trend toward lower overall correctness ratings when the informants had spent more time in a German-speaking place. For example, one participant had spent time in Bavaria with her in-laws, and commented on the Bavarian dialect, "That's about as far from German as you're going to get." The difference, however, between the those that had spent the least time in Germany and had the highest ratings, and those that had spent the most time in a German-speaking place and had the lowest ratings, was only 0.3. It is impossible to say with certainty whether or not it is significant due to the low numbers of informants. The fact that the length of time spent in Germany did not influence the ratings to a great extent might be a reflection of the fact that German Canadians tend to adopt the attitudes of their home community, as opposed to the European German attitudes.

In the present study, there are clear-cut examples of participants whose attitudes were influenced by time spent in Germany. One informant was born in

Canada with Swabian heritage, but spent several years in Germany as an adult. While working in Stuttgart, he explained that his Swabian co-workers would have their German corrected or have "little comments directed their way", thus making it obvious that Swabian was not the most correct way to speak. This participant acquired his attitude – or at the very least had it reinforced – while in Germany.

#### Correctness Rating of Own Dialect

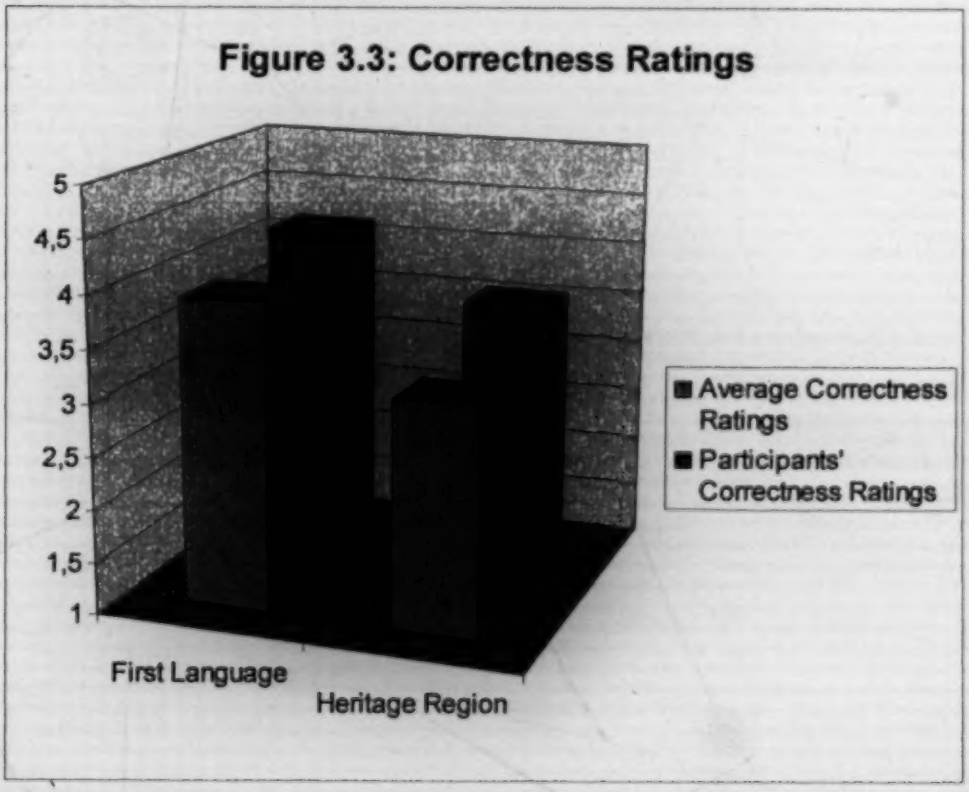
The respondents rated the dialect that most closely corresponds to their first language more highly than the overall average, with an average rating of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 1.06. Comparatively, the average correctness rating, as given by all participants, of the dialects that participants indicated were their first languages was 3.90 and a standard deviation of 0.79. The difference between both the average ratings and the standard deviations of the two ratings is 0.27.

The low levels of standard deviation suggest that there is more of a consensus within the German-Canadian community in Kitchener-Waterloo about the dialects spoken by my informants than the ones that were not. This seems quite logical because it stands to reason that the informants in my study would represent to some extent the make-up of the dialects spoken in the community. German-Canadian Kitchener-Waterloo residents would therefore be more likely to be familiar with the dialects of my participants, which would lead to a greater consensus of the "correctness" of these dialects.

If the participant stated that 'High German' was their first language, then this was assumed to be best represented by Hanover. Hanover was chosen as the

region to best represent High German because it is the area most commonly identified by Germans as having the most correct German, both in Dailey-O'Cain's study (1997) and the present study. This is, however, an imperfect system because six of the 19 participants who identified themselves as speaking High German either currently or as a first language were unfamiliar with the Hanover Dialect, and therefore, they did not rate it for correctness.

Participants also rated their heritage areas as being more correct, on average, than the overall ratings for their dialects. For many participants, their first language and their heritage language were identical. However, some participants indicated that their first language was a dialect that is not normally associated with their heritage region. For example, one participant indicated that his first language was High German and that his parents were from Swabia and Danube Swabia. Therefore, his first language was considered to be the Hanover dialect, and his heritage regions were Swabia and Danube Swabia. Informants rated their heritage dialects an average of 3.57 for correctness, while the average ratings for their dialects by all informants was 3.15, a difference of 0.42.



While most informants rated their dialects as being more correct compared to the rating it received from other participants, this was not always the case. Actually, if the participants commented on the correctness of their dialect, it was usually in a negative way. For example, the informant who had the Baden Dialect both as a first language and a heritage region explained that, "Everything I've heard has been more correct than what we spoke at home." A second participant grew up hearing his grandmother speak Swabian, but he rated it only a '2' for correctness. When asked why, he said that his family used to tell the grandmother, "Nimm doch die Kartoffeln aus dem Mund."[8] He further explained that "Schwäbisch[9] doesn't articulate. It seems to use a lot of 'scht's[10]. They make it lazy German, like English slang when they compact words. It seems to be harsher sounding with 'scht's, a lot of consonants … [and] harsher sounds." His memories of Swabian are undoubtedly biased by the explicit comments that were directed toward his Swabian-speaking grandmother.

Some of the informants were convinced of the inferior nature of their first language, such as the informant who grew up with Danube Swabian background. It was her first language, but after attending German school in Kitchener, she had come to the conclusion that Danube Swabian grammar was not good as High German grammar. After stating that her grammar in High German was not very

[8] "Take the potatoes out of your mouth."
[9] "Schwäbisch" is the German word for "Swabian".
[10] 'Sch' is similar in pronunciation to the English 'sh'. In German, 'sch' is the pronunciation of an 's' in word-initial position. The Swabian dialect is distinct in that an 's' is also pronounced as 'sch' before all unvoiced stops, regardless of where they appear in a word. As an example, the German word for sausage, 'Wurst', is pronounced 'Wurscht' in Swabian.

good, she explained that "Schwobisch[11] is very messy. We're not into all the tenses and the *Genetivs* and the *Dativs*...and the word '*Sie*'[12] isn't even in our vocabulary...but our grammar is very imperfect in Schwobisch. It's very simple, became simplified after they left Germany. It has very simple grammar structure, very simple words. A lot of words don't even exist in Schwobisch... [Danube Swabian] is very, sometimes backwards and messy." Her sentiments were echoed by two other Danube Swabian participants who recalled being corrected and even laughed at by students and teachers alike in German school. Clearly these overt comments on their language stayed with the participants even decades after they left German school and shaped their feelings about the correctness of their own first language.

Some participants did not give a rating for the region where their heritage language is from and/or from the region where their first language is traditionally spoken. Furthermore, some of the participants' dialects were not tested in my study, such as Mennonite German, Danube Swabian, Ruhr dialect, Low Almanac, and East Frisian.

There is some doubt, however, about the how accurately the participants were able to label their home dialects. For example, siblings that were interviewed separately reported learning different dialects as their first language and having heard different dialects growing up. Thankfully, this is not actually all that problematic because what I am looking at are the impressions that the informants have of different dialects. Whether or not they have the same label for

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[11] According to this participant, the German Canadian community refers to Danube Swabian as 'Schwobisch', distinguishing it from Swabian, or 'Schwäbish'.
[12] 'Sie' is the formal second person in German, a polite way of saying 'you'.

that dialect is not particularly relevant. It does show that German Canadians are not always familiar with the labels traditionally associated with different dialects, even when they are speakers of that dialect.

Also interesting was the fact that some informants were comfortable rating different dialects for correctness, regardless of whether or not they were familiar with that dialect. For example, one participant said tellingly that Berliners "have very bad grammar...apparently." This quote shows that he had adopted an attitude associated with the Berlin dialect even though he was not personally familiar with it. Other informants were reluctant to refer to different regions as having their own dialect, although they recognized that people speak differently there. One informant told me that in Berlin, like Cologne, "they speak that slang kind of German," showing that he could recognize that it is not Standard German, but he was unsure about the dialect name or if it is even considered a dialect.

#### Response to Correctness Task

Something unexpected happened during six of the interviews: the informants were reluctant to complete the first rating activity. They felt uncomfortable labeling the dialects as 'correct' or 'incorrect'. In addition, several other informants also needed clarification as to what exactly I meant by 'correct' when it came to dialects. I found that using the analogy that most people would not consider Newfoundland English to be "correct" helped to clarify what the rating activity was looking for, and the majority then completed it without hesitation.

In this study, 'correct' could be synonymous with 'proper'. Inherent within the idea of a dialect being more or less correct are beliefs about how the German language should be spoken. Some of the informants, however, disagreed with the principle of calling a dialect 'incorrect.' One informant who spent time in Austria appeared satisfied with my explanations of what a 'correct' dialect should be until it came to rating Austrian German. The Austrian dialect "is correct for the place…I'm still trying to figure out – it's correct for the area. If that's correct for the area, that's correct for that area." After this point, all of the ratings increased to '4's or '5's (or unknowns). Unprompted, she justified her higher ratings by saying, "I actually really like dialects. We have friends that speak all different dialects. We laugh at each other sometimes, but we don't consider it incorrect."

One participant argued that she was not comfortable rating the Berlin dialect because "Berlin is a dialect. If you ask if it is correct, it is correct as a dialect. If it grammatically correct compared to High German, that is a different question." The question of a dialect being correct, "doesn't sit right." However, when asked about Saxon, Bavarian, Swiss, and Hessian, the informant laughed, and when asked about Swiss German, she even exclaimed, "That's a minus '1'!" We discussed the validity of calling a dialect 'correct' for seven minutes until we found a rewording of the question that she was comfortable with, namely, "How far away is the dialect from High German?" After this, the informant rated the dialects quite low, with an average correctness rating of '2' – which tied with one other participant for the lowest overall correctness ratings.

Similarly, one of the informants explained that "It's not fair," because for every place, what they speak there is correct. When asked about the Berlin dialect, she argued, "well, if you ask a Berliner, they will say it's correct…Who's to say? Who's to advocate that that's a High German? It's the area where you live." In order to put the rating activity into an English context, I mentioned that many people in Canada wouldn't consider the southern habit of saying "y'all" to be correct. To this example of Southern American English, she replied, "Instead of saying 'X', they say 'Y'. That's the way they are…Who am I to say?"

Interestingly, one participant initially reworded "correct" into "what I personally experience in myself as true German," but he was still not comfortable with the activity and rated all dialects as a '5' for 'correctness'. However, when I asked this participant about his experiences with Swabian, he explained that "you can get to like it - eventually…Not that I was in the area for months on end. … Once you get into that flow, yes, it sounds polite. It's not my interpretation on proper German, of course. When I first heard it, it would have been my first trip to Germany, and oh boy." Even though he rated this dialect as perfectly correct, it still was not 'proper German' to him.

This resistance to labeling dialects 'correct' or 'incorrect' came as a surprise because Dailey-O'Cain (1997) did not make any mention of this occurring in her study. It is possible that it is a phenomenon that occurs only among bilinguals – the result of being fluent in more than one language.

## Pleasantness

The informants were asked to rate the 14 dialects as to how pleasant they perceived them to be on a scale from '5', 'very pleasant', to '1', 'not pleasant at all'. Each respondent's mean pleasantness rating was calculated, and a range of 3 to 4.8 was established. The pleasantness task elicited a tighter range than the correctness task (which was 2.0 to 5.0 for participants' average responses). The range of the average rating for each dialect was even smaller: 3.1 to 4.0, compared to 2.2 to 4.2 for correctness.

**Table 3.2: Pleasantness Responses**

| Dialect Name | Average | Standard Deviation | # of Responses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Austrian | 4,0 | 1,12 | 24 |
| Swabian | 4,0 | 1,02 | 21 |
| Bavarian | 3,9 | 1,24 | 23 |
| Cologne dialect | 3,9 | 0,93 | 17 |
| Hanover dialect | 3,9 | 1,05 | 17 |
| Hamburg dialect | 3,8 | 0,98 | 21 |
| Rheinland dialect | 3,8 | 0,92 | 19 |
| Berlin dialect | 3,8 | 1,00 | 21 |
| Silesian dialect | 3,3 | 1,06 | 10 |
| Baden | 3,3 | 0,91 | 14 |
| Saxon | 3,2 | 1,11 | 22 |
| Franconian | 3,2 | 1,03 | 12 |
| Swiss | 3,2 | 1,27 | 20 |
| Hessian dialect | 3,1 | 0,54 | 11 |
| **Averages overall:** | **3,6** | **1,00** | **17,3** |

Although respondents rated the dialects more pleasant overall when compared to the correctness ratings, some respondents found this task more of a challenge. As one participant noted, "Well, the German language to begin with is not very nice sounding." Most participants, however, gave higher ratings in the pleasantness task than during the other two tasks.

There is a slightly lower standard deviation for the pleasantness ratings, which suggests that the informants not only find the dialects more pleasant than they do correct, but also that they are more in agreement about which dialects are pleasant than which ones are correct.

In distinct opposition to the correctness ratings, the top three dialects for pleasantness are southern dialects. When the informants rated the dialects for correctness, the southern dialects were considered, on average, the least correct. However, the participants clearly perceive the southern dialects as more pleasant. This trend may be best explained by looking at the overall perceptions that German Canadians have of northern and southern Germany. One participant described the situation as "the further south you go, the more welcoming and friendly people are." She continued on by relating a story of her travels throughout Germany:

> I found in Hanover especially that the people on the streets were a bit arrogant. I was astonished… rude, rude, whereas it was very, very noticeable as you drove southward. … There was a certain genuine generosity there, a certain goodwill. They were poorer than in the North, but they would welcome you with open arms.

Having these kinds of positive experiences and perceptions of the people in the south may affect the perception of the pleasantness of their language.

#### Influence of Independent Variables

Women rated the dialects slightly more pleasant on average than their male counterparts did. The women in this study gave an average pleasantness rating at 3.72, while the men had an average rating of 3.5. The small number of

participants, however, does not allow for testing to see if this is indicative of a larger trend of a difference in the genders.

The respondents' average ratings were grouped into age groups by decades, with the 20 to 29 year olds finding the dialects the least pleasant overall with an average rating of 3.36. The 30 to 39 year olds rated the dialects 3.53 on average, while the 40 to 49 year olds found the dialects to be most pleasant overall, with a 3.82 average rating. The participants who were 50 years old also had a relatively high average rating of the dialects with 3.76. Perhaps this is a reflection of the so-called mellowing effect that occurs with age – there was a general trend that corresponded with older participants finding the dialects more pleasant overall than the younger participants.

Socio-economic status was regarded here as being related to the educational levels of the participants, as it was in the correctness ratings. Interestingly, the two groups that rated the dialects as the most correct were also the groups that rated the dialects as being the most pleasant. The participants with some college or university but no degree and those with a college degree found the dialects to be the most pleasant, with average ratings of 3.96 and 3.75 respectively. In comparison, the lowest average pleasantness rating of 3.35 was given by respondents with high school diplomas only. Participants who have completed a Bachelors degree had average responses of 3.475, while those with graduate or professional degrees gave the dialects a mean rating of 3.66. There was no distinct trend found in the pleasantness ratings as they relate to education level, unlike the correctness ratings, which is possibly due to the fact that

language attitudes towards the correctness of a language are inadvertently taught in schools, whereas perceptions of the relative pleasantness of dialects rely more on exposure to the dialects.

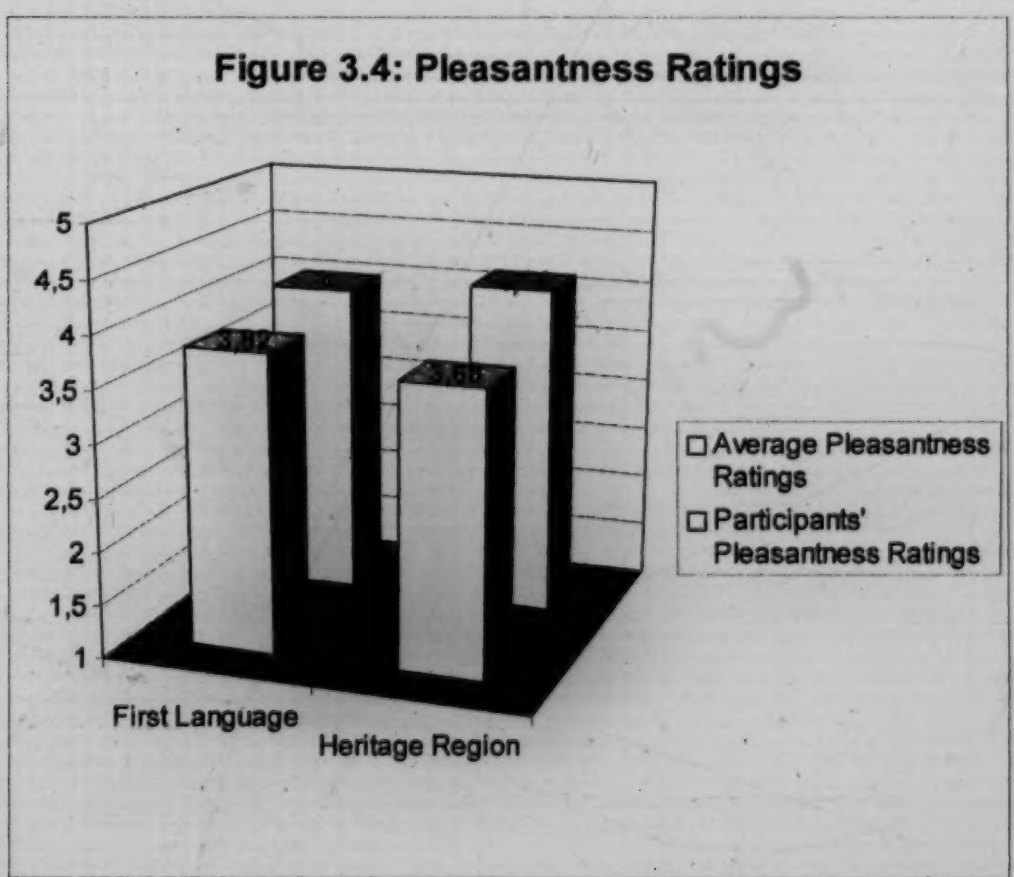
The amount of time that participants have spent in a German-speaking place did not appear to have a strong influence on their pleasantness ratings. The average ratings for those who had spent less than six months in a German-speaking place, such as Germany or Austria, was 3.52, while those spending six months to two years there had an average rating of 3.39. Participants who had spent a little more time in Germany did have slightly higher average ratings: those who had spent more than two years and up to five years in a German-speaking place had average ratings of 3.825, while those who lived more than five years there rated the dialects 3.775 on average. These results demonstrate that attitudes towards the perceived pleasantness of a given dialect are influenced more by the German-Canadian community norms than by European-German norms.

#### Pleasantness Rating of Own Dialect

In the correctness task, the respondents rated their own dialects higher on average than everybody else did. The same phenomenon was found in the pleasantness ratings. Participants consistently rated their own dialects slightly higher than the average pleasantness rating for that dialect. For example, the participant who identified his first language as being Swabian gave it a '5' for pleasantness. The average pleasantness rating for Swabian, however, was 3.95.

The chart below shows the participants' average rating of their own dialect contrasted with all respondents' ratings of their dialects. The first set of columns shows the two ratings for the language that participants identified as being their first, and the second set shows the results for the dialects that are represented by the heritage regions of the participants. For example, one participant lived in Hessen for 11 years, but identified her first language as being High German. The heritage language for this participant was considered to be Hessian. Overall, the ratings for the heritage regions showed more of a contrast than the first languages.

**Figure 3.4: Pleasantness Ratings**



The dialects that the participants were most familiar with are the ones that participants are most likely to have a personal connection with, and it is therefore understandable that it is associated with more ideas of pleasantness. A participant that identified himself as speaking Swabian as his first language exemplified this phenomenon: "Schwäbisch sounds nicer to me than Hochdeutsch[13]. Hochdeutsch sounds cold. ... Schwäbisch is like you're expecting a warm hug." A second participant lamented on having to rate their own first language, Swabian, for correctness: "Swabian is my personal opinion would be [a five], but I know it's completely--" and gave Swabian the lowest rating for correctness, yet the highest rating for pleasantness.

Not all participants rated their own dialect as more pleasant, however. One respondent who has Badish heritage explained that he does not like the way his own dialect sounds, and High German is "elegant and nicer." Interestingly, there were fewer differences in the pleasantness ratings of the participants' own dialects than in the correctness ratings. In other words, the difference was more pronounced when participants were rating the correctness than when rating the perceived pleasantness.

## Similarity

In the final rating activity, participants judged the dialects in terms of their perceived similarity to the kind of German that they speak. The informants rated

[13] *Hochdeutsch* = High German (Standard German)

the 14 dialects on a scale from '5' or 'very similar', to '1', 'not similar at all'. Each respondent's mean similarity rating was calculated, and a range of 1.9 to 4.0 was established.

**Table 3.3: Similarity Responses**

| Dialect Name | Average | Standard Deviation | # of Responses |
|---|---|---|---|
| Swabian | 3,2 | 1,31 | 22 |
| Rheinland dialect | 3,2 | 0,98 | 19 |
| Berlin dialect | 3,2 | 1,57 | 21 |
| Hanover dialect | 2,9 | 1,58 | 19 |
| Baden dialect | 2,9 | 1,16 | 15 |
| Austrian | 2,9 | 1,36 | 24 |
| Hessian dialect | 2,9 | 1,10 | 14 |
| Franconian | 2,8 | 1,19 | 17 |
| Cologne dialect | 2,7 | 0,97 | 18 |
| Bavarian | 2,6 | 1,14 | 22 |
| Hamburg dialect | 2,6 | 1,29 | 22 |
| Saxon | 2,5 | 1,10 | 20 |
| Silesian dialect | 2,4 | 0,92 | 11 |
| Swiss | 2,0 | 1,14 | 21 |
| Averages overall: | 2,9 | 1,20 | 18,9 |

Although Swabian was rated second last in terms of correctness, it received the highest results for similarity, possibly because of the high numbers of participants with Swabian and/or Danube Swabian heritage. Swiss German continued to have very low ratings, with 0.4 lower than any other dialect. The previous two rating activities had noticeable geographic trends such as north-south divisions, which were not found in this rating activity.

Familiarity with a dialect may also influence the similarity rating that participants gave. One informant from the Ruhr area of Germany (in the Midwest) has Austrian friends and her husband is from Austria. She gave

Austrian German the highest rating for similarity, a '5', indicating that it is 'very similar' to the kind of German that she herself speaks.

The Hanover dialect was unique in that it was the one dialect for which the spread of 'similarity' responses did not seem to follow a pattern. For example, Swiss German received mostly '1's for similarity, along with several '2's and a few '3's. There were no '4's, and just one '5' from the participant who was born there. This rather predictable pattern was repeated for all the dialects – the responses clustered around an average rating. The Hanover dialect, however, received either high marks or low marks for similarity, with only participant choosing the neutral '3' option. Nine participants rated Hanover a '1' or '2' for similarity, and nine participants also rated it a '4' or '5' for similarity. There would seem to be strong opinions about how similar the Hanover dialect is, although there is little agreement within the German-speaking community.

#### Influence of Independent Variables

The males in this study considered the dialects to be more similar on average than the females did. The average similarity rating for the males was 3.09, compared to 2.65 for the females. This was the only rating activity for which gender appeared to influence the results.

The participants in the study who were in the highest age bracket, 50-60 years old, found the dialects to be the least similar. They had an average similarity rating of 2.59. The other three age groups of participants all gave average ratings of around '3' or 'neither similar nor dissimilar'. It was broken down as follows: the 20 to 29 year olds had an average rating of 2.93; the 30 to

39 year olds had an average of exactly 3, and participants in the 40s had an average of 3.06. If we accept that older participants will have had more contact with German dialects than younger participants, this then suggests that even repeated exposure to a given dialect – as is certain to happen more frequently with older participants than with younger – does not convince the participant that any more similarities or differences exist.

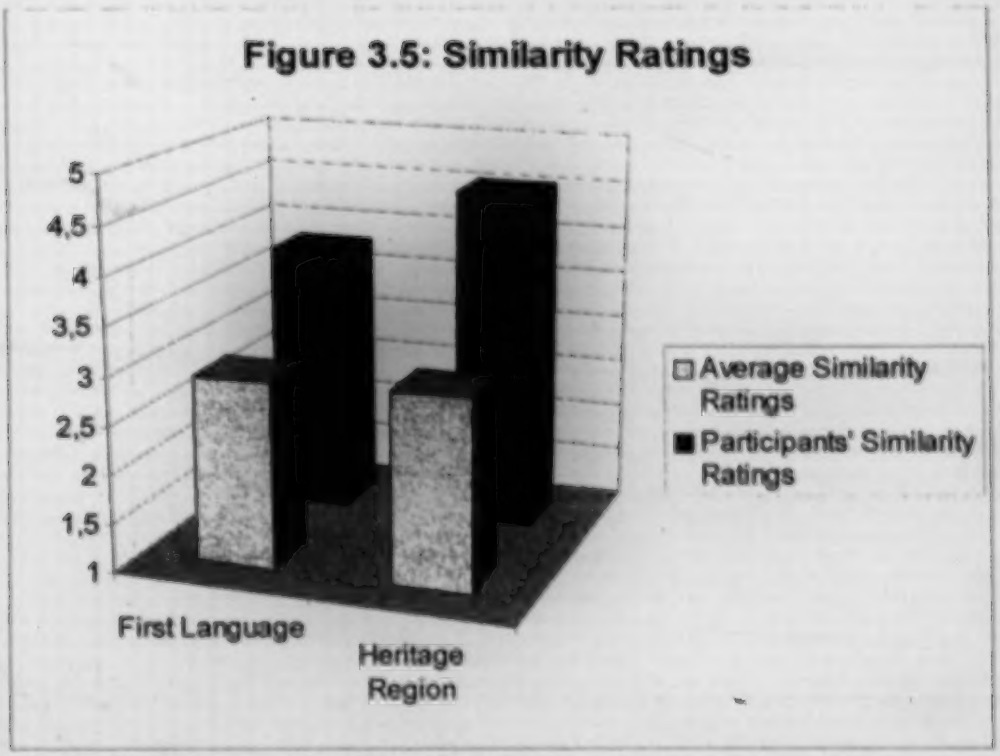
All but the lowest education level had very similar ratings. While this may be indicative of a larger trend, with only four samples in the lowest education group, there are too few samples for conclusions to be drawn at this time. Participants who had their high school diploma, but did not receive any tertiary education, gave the dialects an average rating of 2.15 for similarity. The average responses for the categories of respondents with higher levels of education range from 2.86 to 3.35, with an overall average rating of 3. Participants with higher levels of education rated other dialects more similar on average than those with high school diplomas only.

Interestingly, the more time that participants spent in Germany was associated with lower ratings of similarity. Participants who had spent less than six months in a German-speaking area rated other dialects more similar than those who spent more time there. Respondents who had spent less than six months in Germany rated other dialects 3.32 for similarity on average, compared with 2.77 for participants who had lived in a German-speaking place for six months to two years, and 2.8 for participants who had lived in a German-speaking place for two to five years. The most dramatic difference was seen with informants who had

lived in Germany or another German-speaking place for more than five years: they had an average rating of 2.66 for similarity. Being in Germany or in a German-speaking place offers first-hand exposure to different dialects – as opposed to the 'second-hand' exposure experienced in Canada – that convinces German Canadians that their own dialect is distinct from other ways of speaking German.

#### Similarity Rating of Own Dialect

Similar to the previous two sections, participants rated how similar certain dialects were to their own. Participants gave an average rating of 3.81 when rating the dialect that most closely corresponds to their first language, for example, the Hanover dialect if they indicated that High German was their first language. Instead of comparing this number to the overall average similarity rating, I looked at the similarity rating only of the dialects that participants had indicated were their first languages. Actually, this number was almost identical to the overall average: 2.91 for the participants' dialects, compared to 2.85 for all dialects under study. The respondents rated their own dialect 0.9 higher on average than the mean rating for all the participants' dialects.




Next the participants' ratings of the dialects that most closely correspond to the regions that they had the most affiliation with, or their heritage regions, were examined. The greatest difference was seen when comparing the participants' similarity rating of their own heritage dialect and the average ratings of all the heritage dialects represented in this study. The average rating of dialects that are closest to the heritage regions found in this study was 2.94. This number is very close to the 2.85 found for all dialects. The participants rated the dialect the most closely corresponds with their heritage region an average of 4.54, which is an average 1.5 higher than the overall average, and 0.6 higher than their first languages. This seems to indicate that participants have a stronger affiliation with

the dialects of their heritage regions, as opposed to the actual language they reported speaking.

These ratings may be a result of perception – some participants may not see Hanover as representing High German, and therefore would not rate it as having a similar kind of German, even if the participant indicated that they spoke High German. The average 'similarity' rating of Hanover German for participants who indicated that they spoke High German as first language was 2.53, which is 1.3 points lower than the average similarity rating of 3.81 for all of the participants' first languages.

## In Their Own Words: On Being German in Canada

Inevitably, some German Canadians remember times of unfair treatment and discrimination, especially if they immigrated to Canada shortly after World War II. One participant who emigrated in the 1960s remembers being treated unjustly by fellow students and teachers alike: "It was soon after the war, so they got away with it." A second participant had similar tales of being teased and called a 'D.P.' after coming to Canada at age four, and she explained that "everyone tried to forget that we were German when I came." Still another participant recalled telling people that her family was from Holland, not Germany, in order to avoid the discrimination. It was mostly older participants who were born in Germany that recalled experiencing this kind of treatment.

The younger participants and those born in Canada had a different kind of concern – that their German-language experience was not adequate to answer the questions in my study. German Canadians have fewer opportunities to speak

German than their European counterparts. The opportunities that that German Canadians do have are often limited in scope – for example, at home and church, but not in business or social situations. With fewer chances to speak and hear German, they would therefore also have less exposure to the attitudes that are associated with German dialects. As one participant lamented, "it's hard here because people are here so long their language becomes anglicized <pause> and old. If you're speaking it in Germany, it's progressive. Because we're not in contact with them that much… it sort of becomes older (styles) like Sächsisch." The respondent was referring to the fact that German in Europe is constantly evolving and changing, but when a person only speaks German with people who have not lived in Europe for decades, then their German also becomes markedly aged.

Another concern that several participants expressed was that they were not familiar with 'true' speakers of the dialects in the study; they only knew German Canadians who spoke that dialect, and not European Germans. A participant who was born in southern Germany but came to Canada as a child explained that "the problem is, like the Saxon dialect, I only know those people here. I don't really know them in their own environment." Several respondents questioned their knowledge of the dialects because of what they perceived as second-rate exposure to them. On the other hand, one participant who was born and raised in Kitchener, Ontario found that growing up in Canada has advantages in this regard. German Canadians of all different dialect heritages tend to migrate to the same places, she

explained, and therefore they are exposed to more dialects in Kitchener than they would be if they lived in Germany.

At the end of the interview, I asked participants what kind of German they speak today. Interestingly, some of the participants said that they currently speak "Kitchener Deutsch" or the kind of German spoken in Kitchener-Waterloo, although none of the participants said this was their first language. One informant who was born in Kitchener described the German that he speaks as a mix of High German, Swabian, and Kitchener German. He further explained that he speaks "a very informal German…improper." When asked what makes it improper, he said, "Just putting the verbs together." There was a general consensus among the Kitchener-German-speaking participants that the dialect in Kitchener was not proper. "What they did to the German language is outrageous," lamented one participant, "they adopted so many English words."

The German-Canadian experience is obviously one with many differences when compared to the European German experience. The extent of exposure and the kind of exposure to German dialects is unique to each person in Kitchener, and quite unlike what one would encounter in Germany or Austria. That many participants saw it as inferior in some way was unexpected but understandable because it differs quite dramatically from what many would consider the 'standard' – growing up in Germany.

## Participants' Limited Knowledge of Dialects

Generally speaking, participants have had less exposure to German dialects growing up in Canada than their European counterparts would have. I

therefore expected high rates of 'don't know's for the dialects in the present study. What was unexpected, however, was that sometimes participants would mark a given dialect as 'don't know' for the correctness rating, and then go on to rate it for pleasantness and/or similarity.

I opted to include these participants' data for several reasons, mainly because I generally pointed out on a map during the interviews approximately where the dialects were spoken in Germany. This gave participants an idea, for example, about how similar a given dialect would be to their own, given its geographical location. Also important was the fact that many participants hesitated about doing the correctness exercise at all, and still others likely did not have a solid idea of what a 'correct' dialect should sound like. Some informants rated certain dialects for correctness only, which could possibly be explained by them having an idea of where correct German is spoken, in north-western Germany for example, and the informant could therefore make an educated guess about how 'correct' each dialect was based on its location, even if they did not know exactly what it sounds like.

Still another explanation for inconsistent answers is that some participants did not know the name for a given dialect, but did have an idea of the German that is spoken there. One informant, for example, stated that in Berlin, like Cologne, "they speak that slang kind of German." The informant therefore demonstrated that they recognized that people do not speak High German in certain cities, but they were not sure about the dialect's name, or even if it is considered a dialect. A second participant concurred and said that he was not sure

what the dialect from Berlin is called. "I don't know, but some of my aunts speak this weirdo shit, and it's from Berlin." This was part of a larger trend of participants not knowing the conventional names for dialects, but still having an opinion on the type of German that is spoken in a given region.

A third participant did not know the name of the dialect that he himself spoke. When I asked if it was Swabian, based on his heritage region, he replied, "that's probably the one I know, and I know that's not very correct." Even though the participant did not know the name of his dialect, he was aware of the prevailing attitude toward it.

### Standard German versus the Dialects

When asked about his father's dialect, a man who had grown up in a German-speaking region of present-day Poland, the informant replied, "He would only speak High German. He didn't speak Silesian.[14] And they had the only flush toilet in the city." This participant clearly sees speaking High German as something that is prestigious, as can be surmised from the association with modern plumbing. Many participants made more general comments about Standard German and German dialects that did not fit into any of the previous categories, but were still revealing of prevailing attitudes about High German, especially as it relates to the dialects. These comments either supported the notion that Standard German was in someway superior to the dialects, such as the quote above, or else lamented the fact that participants had been discouraged from or even ridiculed for speaking their dialects. No doubt these two types of attitudes

[14] Silesian is the German dialect that was spoken in the West of present-day Poland.

are related: if someone hears, and especially if they themselves receive, criticism about a dialect, then the notion that High German is somehow better is reinforced.

Two participants recalled their experiences in German Saturday School, which teaches children in their heritage language for about three hours each week. An informant whose first and, at the time, only German dialect was Danube Swabian, remembered being corrected and told, "'That's not German.' ... That happened to me, and that happened to both my sons," when they attended German School as well. The participant added that the school has experienced a "brain readjustment" recently so that teachers are now instructed to say something like, "yes, that's xxxx in your dialect, but here at school we are learning High German. The High German word is yyyy." A second participant had a similar experience of being corrected in Saturday School, but added, "whether [Standard German] was correct or not, it was what they wanted you to speak."

In the past, dialects were discouraged in formal education in the Kitchener German School. One informant who currently works at the Saturday School confirmed that the teachers there "are required to speak a High German" still today. Some participants felt that this was for the best: "I'm hoping that if someone teaches [German], offers it, they would offer the highest standard available, that you would teach the High German. Same as when I went to school. I was taught the Parisian French whereas now it's Quebecois, and that is also sloppy French." Interestingly, this sort of comment may indicate that if the participant has a tendency for declaring Standard German to be better, then they

probably think that way about different languages too. In other words, some participants felt that there is a better and worse way of speaking every language.

### The Best German

One of the final questions in this study was where the participant felt that the best German is spoken, and where the best English is spoken. Eighteen of the 24 participants had an opinion about where the best German is spoken, with 14 respondents (78%) agreeing with the popular European German assertion that the best German comes from Northern Germany, or Hanover in particular. The German spoken in Hanover is often cited as having the kind of pronunciation that is both favoured in academic and business settings, and is seen as reflecting the written language most accurately. Interestingly, the first language of the participant (whether it was High German or another dialect) did not appear to correlate with choosing Hanover/Northern German as the 'best' kind of German. There was also no apparent connection between the amount of time spent in Germany and the kind of German that was chosen as the 'best'. This would seem to suggest that it is a norm within the German-Canadian community that influences participants' responses, a trend that was supported by the qualitative evidence mentioned in the previous section, "Standard German versus the Dialects".

Ten of the 21 the participants that identified a specific place with having the best English chose Britain, and nine chose places within Canada. This was interesting in several respects – first, it shows that the participants had a clear idea of what constitutes good English, despite the fact that different English-speaking

countries have different standards. Secondly, nine out of 21 (or 43%) of respondents saw their own dialect, the Canadian dialect, as being the best. When it came to judging German dialects, however, participants were no more likely to choose their dialects as the 'best' than the general population.

## Summary of Trends

In this section, the trends found in the correctness task, the pleasantness task, and in the similarity task will be discussed. In addition, I will also review the insights gained from the qualitative data, or spoken comments, that the participants made.

### *Correctness*

The participants in this study considered the Hanover dialect to be the most correct. The general trend was to see northern dialects rated more highly than central dialects, and central dialects rated more highly than southern dialects. There was a distinct relationship between the geographical location of the dialect and the rating it received: the more northerly the dialect, the higher its rating. Interestingly, the geographical heritage region of the informant also played a role in their responses: the more northerly the heritage region, the higher the overall correctness rating.

Some social factors, such as education level, did seem to have an effect on the overall correctness ratings given, specifically, more education was associated with lower correctness ratings. This mirrors the findings of both Dailey-O'Cain and Gardner-Chloros et al. Age, gender, and the length of residence in a

German-speaking place all did not seem to influence responses to the correctness task. Almost all participants gave their own dialect(s) a higher correctness rating than the average, however, the exceptions to this were speakers of more stigmatized dialects. These participants often gave an explanation as to why they thought their own dialect was incorrect. Some participants were reluctant to label any dialects as either being correct or incorrect, preferring to view German as a pluricentric language, with each dialect correct in its own right.

*Pleasantness*

When the informants were asked to rate the dialects for how pleasant they perceived them, the resulting range of both the average individual response and the average dialect response were much smaller with lower standard deviations, and both had higher averages. In addition, in distinct opposition to the trend in the correctness task to rate northern dialects higher, the southern dialects were found to be more pleasant than the northern ones. There was more consensus among the respondents about which dialects are pleasant, and they found the dialects more pleasant than correct overall.

The only social factors that appear to play a role in determining ratings for the pleasantness task were age and exposure to dialects. The younger the participant, the more likely they are to give a negative assessment of a dialect's pleasantness. In addition, participants gave slightly higher than average pleasantness ratings of their own first language and their own heritage language

than the average participant did. Gender, socio-economic status, and length of residence in Germany do not appear to influence the pleasantness ratings.

*Similarity*

Unlike the pleasantness and correctness tasks, no geographic trends were found in the similarity exercise. There was, however, the largest range of averages for this activity when compared to the other two. Respondents rated the dialects' similarity lower than both correctness and pleasantness on average, and in addition, there was the highest standard deviation of all three tasks. While there was less agreement about which dialects are the most similar, the informants did find dialects less similar than pleasant or correct overall.

The social factors that appeared to influence similarity ratings were gender, socio-economic status, and residence in Germany. Male respondents gave slightly higher ratings than females did, and all the age groups had average ratings hovering around the neutral '3' except for 50 to 60 year olds, who found the dialects the most dissimilar. Lower levels of socio-economic status corresponded with lower ratings for similarity, as did longer lengths of residence in Germany. When rating their own first languages and heritage languages, the respondents predictably gave higher-than-average ratings. The differences between the average responses and the participants' ratings of their own dialect were most dramatic for the similarity ratings.

*Insights from Qualitative Data*

Some participants worried that they were not able to adequately respond to the questions in the study because they had only become familiar with the different dialects in Kitchener and not in Germany. They saw this kind of exposure as being inferior to the kind of exposure one would have in Germany, Austria, or Switzerland.

One unexpected trend in this study was the fact that some participants rated a given dialect in one task, but indicated 'don't know' for the others. This could sometimes be explained by participants' unfamiliarity with the names of the dialects. Other times, participants were more confident rating the dialects once I used a map to show where in Germany this dialect is spoken.

A few comments about the superiority or at least dominance of Standard German over other German dialects revealed either displeasure with the current situation or a preference for High German in formal situations. Some non-standard dialect speakers lamented the fact that they were corrected or even laughed at for speaking their dialects, while others showed either pride in the fact that they spoke High German or support for the current ideology that supports High German. This lack of consensus about the role of High German versus the role of other German dialects is also mirrored in Germany itself today.

The overwhelming majority of respondents chose Hanover or Northern Germany as having the 'best kind of German', a trend that is also reflected in Germany. The fact that length of residence did not seem to influence whether or not a participant chose Hanover as having the best kind of German, however,

seems to indicate that this is a language ideology that passed on in the German community in Ontario as opposed to exposure in Germany itself.

## Conclusions

The study of language attitudes has encompassed many different forms, from examining historical data (Barbour, 2000 and Auer, 2004, among others), and looking at contemporary phenomena (Cameron, 2005, among others), to direct testing methods, such the matched guise technique developed by Lambert et al. (1960). Although the tradition of indirect testing of folk linguistic perceptions began with hopes of supporting linguistic fact (for example, Grootaers, 1959), it has now become a field in its own right. Preston (1989) advocated studying folk linguistics through Perceptual Dialectology, which looks at how non-linguists view the geographical boundaries of dialects and their ratings of specific dialects in terms or correctness, pleasantness, and similarity to the way that they speak. Perceptual Dialectology studies allow a glimpse into the past and possibly the future directions of a language, unlike production studies, which can only paint a picture of the present situation of a given language.

In the present study, Perceptual Dialectology was used to look at the German-Canadian community in Kitchener and their attitudes towards traditional German dialects. This methodology was chosen because it is indirect, and thereby encourages more honesty from the participant than if they were asked directly. Furthermore, Perceptual Dialectology allows a broad picture of many dialects to be garnered, and does not limit information to only a few language varieties.

### Language Ideologies: the Dialects

The most prevalent language ideology that was found in my study was the prestige that was attached to Standard German. Although the participants did not

always associate Standard German with the region around Hanover as Germans would tend to do, they still had very definite ideas about why it was superior. Some dialects were seen as being less grammatical or having simpler grammar. High German is the language of German School, and some participants remembered being corrected or made fun of in school. Other participants recalled hearing criticisms and mockery of dialects from their family and friends.

'Prestige' can be most closely correlated with the ideas of correctness that were measured in this study. Previous studies have supported the finding that participants rated the standard dialect, i.e., the kind of language spoken around Hanover, to be more prestigious or 'correct' than other German dialects. This seemed also to have a kind of trickle-down effect in that northern German dialects, to which Hanover belongs, were rated higher than central, southern, and non-German dialects.

Although the northern dialects were more favoured when it came to correctness, this trend was reversed when participants considered how pleasant a dialect was. Southern dialects were rated the most pleasant, with the exceptions of the Baden dialect and Swiss German, followed by northern and central dialects. There were no distinct geographical trends found in the similarity exercise, which is likely a reflection of the various heritage regions of the participants.

A general trend found in this study is that the participants consistently rated their own dialect as more correct, pleasant, and similar than the average. This was true for the languages that participants indicated were their first languages, and for the dialects of the heritage regions that participants mentioned.

Participants also consistently rated their own dialect as being more pleasant and, of course, similar, than the average rating for their dialect.

Participants found the German dialects more pleasant overall than they did correct or similar. There was also greater agreement among the participants about which dialects were pleasant, as was evidenced by a slightly lower average standard deviation. The average ratings for the dialects spoken by the participants in this study had a much lower standard deviation than those dialects not represented in this study. If the participants are accepted as a reasonably representative sample of the dialects present in the Kitchener-Waterloo area, than this indicates a higher level of agreement among the participants about the dialects they are more exposed to, and therefore norms within the community about which dialects are more correct, pleasant, and even similar to the Kitchener German variant.

## Language Ideology: The Idea of Correctness

Many of the participants were initially confused when asked to rate the dialects as correct or incorrect. Six of the 24, or a quarter of the participants, engaged in ideological debates about the validity of labeling a dialect as 'incorrect'. Several of the most vocal opponents to this rating activity did show signs of having an opinion as to the correctness of the dialect, which they revealed in value-laden comments later on. This begs the obvious question: why were they reluctant to overtly label dialects as being more or less correct when they appeared to possess opinions about correctness, especially considering that the Germans in Dailey-O'Cain's (1997) study had no such qualms? Although this

study was not designed to answer this question, it seems possible that being bilingual, as opposed to monolingually German, was main reason for their reluctance. Perhaps bilinguals a whole are less likely to feel comfortable judging the correctness of a dialect. In order to circumvent this reluctance, it would have been preferable to find a wording of the correctness activity that was less troublesome for the participants.

Qualitative data from this study suggest that German Canadians are less likely to openly declare a dialect to correct or incorrect than their European counterparts. At the same time, experiences in German school along with pointed comments from family and friends seemed instrumental in forming negative attitudes towards the dialects. This suggests that there is an overall propensity toward increasing High German usage, and a situation that mirrors that of Germany itself where the dialects are quickly losing ground to Standard German.

## Independent Variables

In order to determine which independent variables influenced responses, I looked at five distinct participant characteristics throughout the study. I wanted to determine if any associations exist between these demographic factors and the types of responses participants gave. The factors that I looked at were 1. age, 2. gender, 3. education, 4. length of time spent in a German-speaking place, 5. first language and heritage language.

1. The age of the participant did not appear influence their similarity rating. It did, however, tend to play a role with pleasantness ratings, with older participants rating the dialects more pleasant on average

than their younger counterparts. Older participants also appeared to rate the dialects as being more correct overall than younger participants. This reflects a more general trend of younger respondents being more critical than older.

2. There appear to be very few differences in the ratings between the men and women in my study. Similar to findings in other language attitudinal studies, gender did not appear to influence the results. This suggests that language attitudes are formed irrespective of gender – what is correct, similar, and pleasant for men is also correct, similar and pleasant for women.
3. Participants' level of education was used in this study as a measure of socio-economic status. Less education was associated with higher correctness ratings and lower similarity ratings. Looking at the level of education in conjunction with pleasantness ratings was inconclusive, providing no distinct trends in the ratings. The fact that more education was associated with lower correctness ratings may indicate an indoctrination of a 'standard is better' attitude acquired through formal education.
4. The amount of time informants had resided in a predominately German-speaking place did not affect their pleasantness or correctness evaluations. There was a trend, however, for participants who had spent more time in a German-speaking place to rate the different as

being less similar than those who had spent very little time in Germany or Austria, which was perhaps due to increased exposure.

5. Heritage language was determined by looking at the geographical location of the participants' parents/grandparents and finding the corresponding traditional dialect spoken there. Participants with heritage in Northern Germany had higher over-all correctness ratings than participants with heritage in central and southern regions.

   Informants consistently rated their own dialect as being more correct, more pleasant, and more similar than the average rating for their dialect. This trend was most salient when looking at the region of their heritage as opposed to the language they indicated that they grew up with.

   This may be part of a larger trend of familiarity with a dialect leading to higher ratings, and, conversely, a sense of otherness or difference felt when it comes to dialects that participants have relatively less exposure to. This is supported by the fact that some participants gave higher-than-average ratings to dialects that their friends and/or family spoke even if the participant did not have heritage in that region.

It is not possible to generalize the findings in this study because the small number of participants (24) precludes most methods of statistical analysis. It does, however, suggest some trends that could be examined in further studies, such as

the role that familiarity plays in determining language attitudes and the interplay between education levels and ideas of correctness.

## Relationship to Previous Language Attitudinal Studies

Barbour (2000: 6) and Auer (2004: 151) presented the hypothesis that states in Europe tended to have a drive to establish one standard language for themselves as they strive for a strong nationhood. This leaves open the possibility that the diaspora would be more accepting of dialects than Europeans would be. The participants in this study seemed to be similar to their European counterparts in that they also found the northern dialects, and the Hanover dialect in particular, to be the most correct and also the best kind of German.

The participants appeared to have definite beliefs about what constitutes good language, or the best kind of German. Although there was no evidence of 'verbal hygiene' behaviour (as defined by Cameron, 1995) in this study, there were several comments which revealed prevailing attitudes, such as the informant who relayed the story of correcting her curtain-maker's dialect, and several participants recalled being corrected and/or ridiculed when using their dialect in German school. As Benson (2003: 307) explained, these kinds of actions shape language change and/or maintenance within a given linguistic community.

Woolard (1985: 742) contends that the prestigious language variety is determined by face-to-face interactions and the bourgeoisie. This appeared to be the case in my study because participants frequently cited specific examples from their lives about why they believed a certain dialect to be more or less correct and/or pleasant than another. Furthermore, the importance that Woolard places on

speaking the vernacular in the appropriate situations may have been reflected in the results of this study in that the regions typically associated with Standard German had high correctness ratings. These could be seen as the prestigious or 'status' varieties, which did not fare as well in the pleasantness category. Conversely, the dialects that were rated highly in pleasantness activity could be interpreted as those with more 'solidarity' appeal.

The results of this study are very similar to the findings of Strauch et al. (1995) and Gardner-Chloros et al. (2005). They found that the diaspora were more interested in the standard language than in the dialect of their heritage. It was also found in the present study that the majority of the participants reported speaking some form of High German presently, regardless of the dialect they were raised with.

Some studies, such as Benson (2003: 323), found that people who speak something close to the standard language tend to judge dialects more harshly than the dialect speakers themselves. In this study, however, this trend was not noted. In fact, participants with northern German heritage tended to rate the dialects more highly overall than their southern counterparts.

McNamara (1987: 215) determined that Israeli immigrants in Australia consistently had more positive language attitudes for English than for their native Hebrew, which was not a lingua franca among Australian Jews. This facet of McNamara's study is relevant to the present study because I also found that non-standard dialect speakers rated dialects as less correct than High German. Although McNamara studied only first generation immigrants, the German

dialect speakers in the present study could be seen as the equivalent, i.e.: minorities within a minority like the Israelis are among Australian Jews.

## Limitations

Although this study was enlightening in some respects, there are several questions that it was not able to address. First and foremost, the results of this study are not generalizable because of the relatively small number of participants. In addition, the attitudes expressed by the participants in the study may not be entirely representative of the German-Canadian community in Kitchener Waterloo because it is likely those who felt moved to protect the German language are those who were more likely to reply to the solicitation letter, and to be aware of the study in the first place. This is unfortunately unavoidable due to the voluntary nature of the interviews. It should be noted, however, that the population under study is comprised of people who are devoted to speaking High German and those that are devoted to their dialect, for example, Danube Swabian. Therefore, while they may not be representative of the German community as a whole, they do represent varied aspects of the community.

I was not able to avoid the 'observer's paradox' in this study – that is, informants appeared to say certain things as a result of being observed; however, had I not been observing them, the study would not have been possible. While conducting the interviews, I sometimes received the definite impression that some participants were trying to maintain or create a specific image with their answers. The informants no doubt intended only to be as helpful as possible, however, they were likely times when they overestimated their usage and/or knowledge. There

were several examples of this, the most salient of which was the tendency of a few participants to avoid rating dialects as 'don't know's, despite being unfamiliar with the dialect. This phenomenon of being *too* helpful is in itself quite interesting, but unfortunately not what I was studying.

Finally, it was beyond the scope of this study to look at language loss. As language use declines, it affects not only how often the language is spoken, but also where, with whom, and for what purposes. When the language plays a more limited role, the language attitudes surrounding it will also be affected.

In addition, there were several aspects that I would have changed in the study design with the benefit of hindsight. There were several questions that could have been included in the interview that may have provided more insights, such as asking about involvement in German-speaking religious organizations. Several participants mentioned speaking German in church during the interviews, and it probably would have provided some interesting insights had I explored the role that religion played in their language use.

A second aspect that could have been explored further is the idea of identity, in other words, how the participants saw themselves. This was addressed to some extent when I asked during the interviews, "When a Canadian asks where you are from, what do you say?", and "When a German asks where you are from, what do you say?" I could have also asked if their citizenship was Canadian, German (or another country), or dual, as well as any intentions they had of claiming citizenship. At the very least, it would have been interesting to see if

there was a relationship between the participants' citizenships and the answers they gave to the "where are you from?" questions.

A further improvement to the questionnaire would have been the inclusion of several dialects in the rating activities. There are some dialects that the majority of Germans would not necessarily be familiar with, but which are much more prevalent in Kitchener-Waterloo. For example, some German dialect speakers were forcibly removed from their homelands after the Second World War, and they are now scattered across the globe. Danube Swabians, Transylvanian Germans, and Sudeten Germans are all examples of dialects with thriving communities in Kitchener Waterloo, but they no longer have homelands. Kitchener Germans are also quite familiar with Mennonite German because of the nearby settlements in St. Jacobs. Furthermore, I could have asked about Kitchener German, because some of the participants mentioned it as a distinct dialect during our conversations.

## Implications

The discrimination that is often associated with speaking a dialect can lead to disadvantages on the job scene (Rey, 1977) and even in court (Lippi-Green, 1994). Comments from several of the participants suggest that this preponderance for High German over the dialects does in fact lead to some forms of discrimination at school, and likely in social situations as well.

The relatively more negative attitudes associated with non-standard dialects suggest that there is a trend in Kitchener toward speaking High German and abandoning the dialects. This loss of variety within the community is

regrettable and even an "impoverishment of the human experience," to use Barbour's words (2000: 5). The Kitchener area is home to some of the last communities of several dialects that no longer have a homeland, such as Transylvanian German, Sudeten German, Silesian, and the language of my own ancestors, Danube Swabian. These dialects therefore have no hope of acquiring new native speakers, as the other German dialects do.

Very little work has been carried out to date to determine the language attitudes of the diaspora, and there have been no published studies that have used Perceptual Dialectology with the diaspora. The results of this study may be applicable not only to other minority language groups in Canada, but may also be reflective of the kinds of changes that the attitudes of speakers of other minority language communities undergo when they are located outside of their home country.

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## Appendix B: Questionnaire

Where is German spoken correctly? Please rate the different types of German from 'very correct' (5) to 'not correct at all' (1).

| | | Very correct ← | | | | → Not correct at all |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(don't know)* | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| A. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| B. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| C. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| D. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| E. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| F. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| G. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| H. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| J. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| K. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| L. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| M. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| N. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

**Appendix B: Questionnaire** *cont.*

Where does German sound 'pleasant' or nice? Please rate the different types of German from 'very pleasant' (5) to 'not pleasant at all' (1).

| | | **Very pleasant** ←----------→ **Not pleasant at all** | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(don't know)* | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| A. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| B. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| C. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| D. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| E. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| F. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| G. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| H. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| J. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| K. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| L. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| M. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| N. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

**Appendix B: Questionnaire** *cont.*

Where do people speak German similar to the way you do? Please rate the different types of German from 'very similar' (5) to 'not similar at all' (1).

| | | Very similar ←---------→ Not similar at all | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *(don't know)* | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |
| A. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| B. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| C. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| D. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| E. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| F. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| G. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| H. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| I. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| J. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| K. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| L. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| M. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| N. | X | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

**Appendix B: Questionnaire** *cont.*

About you:

Are you a man or woman? _____

What year were you born? _____

Education & Work:

Did you receive your high school diploma?

_____

What kind of postsecondary education have you had (if any)?

_____

_____

What kind of vocational training have you had (if any), such as learning a trade or doing an apprenticeship?

_____

_____

What is your current job?

_____

_____

German Language Experience:

Where were you born?

_____

Where have you lived? Please write the places and the (approximate) dates.

_____

_____

How long have you spoken German?

_____

_____

How long have you spoken English?

_____

_____

**Appendix B: Questionnaire** *cont.*

Did you receive any of your education in German? If so, what grades?

Was German the main language spoken at home when you were a child?

Is German currently the main language spoken at your home?

Do you currently live with German-speaking people?

How often do you talk with friends in German?

How often do you talk with relatives in German?

Are you a member of any German-speaking organizations (Schwaben Club, Concordia Club, Alpen Club, etc.)?

Which German dialects do you hear on a regular basis?

Which German dialects can you conduct a conversation in (if any)?

Were either of your parents native speakers of German dialects? If yes, please elaborate.

**Appendix B: Questionnaire** *cont.*

Do you have relatives in German-speaking countries? Yes / No

*Please elaborate*_____

_____

Do you have friends in German-speaking countries? Yes / No

*Please elaborate*_____

_____

Have you ever been to a German-speaking country? Yes / No

If so:

1. Which countries? In which area of the country did you visit?

_____

_____

2. How often have you gone to German-speaking countries to visit someone?

_____

_____

3. Why did you go to there? (Business, visiting friends/relatives/vacation…)

_____

_____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. I sincerely appreciate your time and efforts. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this project.

## Appendix C: Interview Guide

The following is a list of the different dialects that participants were asked to rate for correctness, pleasantness, and similarity.

a. Berlin Dialect - Berlinerisch
b. Saxon Dialect - Sächsisch
c. Franconian - Fränkisch
d. Bavarian - Bayrisch
e. Austrian German
f. Swiss German
g. Swabian - Schwäbisch
h. Baden Dialect - Badisch
i. Hessian Dialect - Hessisch
j. Rhineland dialect - Rheinisch
k. Cologne Dialect - Kölsch
l. Hanover Dialect - Hannoverisch
m. Hamburg Dialect – Hamburgisch
n. Silesian - Schlesisch

For the discussion period, the following questions may be asked to elicit opinions and ideas if they are not spontaneously elicited in the discussion period:

1. Where is the best German spoken?
2. Have you ever heard that Hanover is supposed to have the best German?
3. If you had some education in German,
    a. was it in Standard German or a dialect?
    b. do you remember hearing or learning about dialects in German School?
4. The German that you first learned, was it standard or closer to a dialect?
5. When you speak German now with friends or family, what kind of German is it?
6. Do you speak or hear any German dialects on a regular basis?
7. Do you remember ever hearing people talk about the _____ dialect?
8. Have you heard or had any experience with people who speak _____?
9. What do you think of the _____ Dialect?
10. When a Canadian asks you where you are from, what do you say?
11. When a German or a German Canadian asks you where you are from, what do you say?
12. Where is the best English spoken? Does it exist?

THANK YOU!